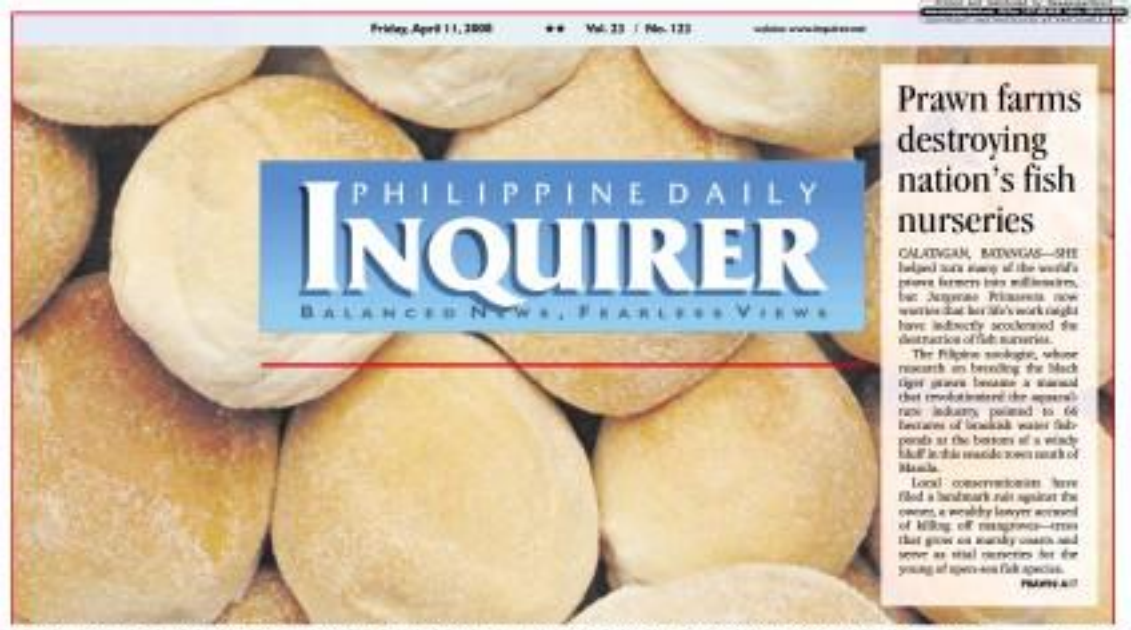
Friday, April 11, 2008 ** Vol. 23 / No. 133 www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



Prawn farms destroying nation's fish nurseries

CALATAGAN, BATANGAS—SHE helped turn many of the world's prawn farmers into millionaires, but Junjuna Primavera now worries that her life's work might have indirectly accelerated the destruction of fish nurseries.

The Filipino zoologist, whose research on breeding the black tiger prawn became a manual that revolutionized the aquaculture industry, pointed to 66 hectares of brackish water fishponds at the bottom of a windy bluff in this seaside town south of Manila.

Local conservationists have filed a landmark suit against the owner, a wealthy lawyer accused of killing off mangroves—trees that grow on marshy coasts and serve as vital nurseries for the young of open-sea fish species.

PRAWNS A-17

PRICES of Juan de la Cruz's favorite breakfast fare—the pan de sal—and other bread products are expected to rise in the middle of this month due to soaring prices of flour in the world market. INQUIRER PHOTO

Bread prices going up, too

'Pan de sal' to cost 25% more on April 15

By Ronnel W. Domingo

STARTING APRIL 15, P10 WILL BUY YOU ONLY FOUR small pieces of *pan de sal*, the breakfast fare of Filipinos, instead of today's five because bakers are raising their prices to reflect soaring flour prices amid low global supply.

Three umbrella groups of bread makers yesterday announced that pan de sal would cost 16 percent to 25 percent more.

"The result of these price adjustment is that the price of pan de sal would go up to P2.50 apiece from P2 for the small size, and P3.50 from P3 for the regular size," said Lauro B. Chavez, vice president of the Philippine Federation of Bakers Association.

A 25-kilogram bag of flour now costs up to P990 ., a 71-percent increase from P580 in June 2007, according to Chavez.

Prices of wheat, from which flour is derived, have jumped 140 percent since April 2007 and 50 percent since last December, according to Albay Gov. Joey Salceda, an economic adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

A combination of high oil and fuel prices, rising demand for food in wealthier Asia, the use of farmland and crops for biofuels, bad weather and speculation on futures markets have all combined to push up prices of rice, wheat and other food items, prompting violent protests in several

BREAD A-14

Spicy Korean kimchi now space delicacy

BAIKONUR, KAZAKHSTAN—WHEN SHE docks at the International Space Station (ISS) on Thursday, South Korea's first astronaut will be bringing a spicy Asian menu that would put earthly space fare to shame.

Cinnamon tea, noodles and South Korea's beloved pickle dish kimchi—all developed by a Korean institute to be bacteria-free—are among the 10 menu items Yi So-yeon will be eating and drinking during her 10-day mission beginning Saturday.

SPICY A-14

Higher NFA rice price opposed

By Norman Bordadora, Michelle V. Ramos and Gil C. Cabunoy Jr.

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY'S plan to raise the selling price of government-subsidized rice is ill-timed, according to administration and opposition lawmakers.

"I don't think this is a wise idea when the poor are sweating under the scorching heat of the sun lining up just for two kilos of NFA rice," Speaker Prospero Nograles said yesterday.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. warned that the Arroyo administration was "asking for trouble" with its plan to tinker with the NFA's subsidized prices.

"Raising rice prices now will have a double effect—raise the profits of rice traders and make it difficult for the people to afford it. Hunger looms so

HIGHER A-17

"WHAT A LIFE, what a hard life," this old lady says as she braves the noonday heat to reach the end of the line to buy four kilos of government-subsidized rice along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City on Thursday. JAMES ALCOY

Hanjin: We have nothing to hide in Subic condos

By Artys dela Cruz
Contributor

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—DESPITE the controversy it has generated, work goes on uninterrupted—three shifts, 24 hours a day—for the more than 1,000 laborers, mostly Filipinos, who are building two high-rise condominiums in the Subic rainforest.

The inauguration of the project being built by South Korea's Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Ltd. has been set for the end of May but some people, including a former tourism official of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), have raised questions. (See related stories on Page A-2 5.)

What should take precedence—development concerns or the environment?

Was the SBMA's zoning policy ol-

HANJIN A-15

GMA: Abra, Apayao poor to get P500 in food aid

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon
and Norman Bordadora
in Manila

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday said that the government would give P500 to each of about 10,000 families in Abra and Apayao, the poorest provinces in the Cordillera, to help them cope with rising food prices.

The P500 is on top of the P300 that a family will get for each child, according to the President. The child subsidy, however, will be limited to three children in a family each month.

Ms Arroyo referred to the food aid as "pangtawid [gutom]" or short-term fatalis to ease hunger.

The government move coincides with the World Bank's suggestion that the least disruptive policy response in dealing with higher prices is for countries to introduce or expand cash transfer programs to the poor.

"Those support the purchasing power of the poor without distorting domestic incentives to produce more food, and without reducing the incomes of poor food sellers," the World Bank said in a policy paper prepared for weekend meetings of world finance chiefs in Washington.

Ms Arroyo said in Bangued, Abra, that the National Food Authority (NFA) would also distribute its subsidized rice to depressed communities instead of through the public markets, where daily queues overwhelm its out-

GMA, A-14

More floods seen due to climate change

BUDAPEST—FLOODING IN TEMPERate regions and the tropics and droughts in arid regions are likely to increase over the course of the century due to climate change, according to a study released on Wednesday.

The study by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the body that won last year's Nobel Prize with former US Vice President Al Gore, said changes in fresh water supplies would have a huge impact on humans and on the environment.

"The frequency of heavy precipitation events (or proportion of total rainfall from heavy falls) will very likely in-

MORE FLOODS A-11

A CHEERFUL Carlos Garcia arrives at the Sandiganbayan for Thursday's verdict.

Ex-AFP comptroller acquitted again

By Jacalyn R. Uy

CHALK UP ANOTHER POINT FOR this former comptroller of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

For the second time, retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia has escaped conviction on perjury charges filed against him in the Sandiganbayan for supposedly falsifying his statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) in 1998.

Garcia's acquittal yesterday by the Sandiganbayan's Second Division was another blow to the prosecution, which, according to the tanggol court, had failed to present sufficient evidence to warrant his conviction.

On May 22, 2006, the Third Division found on proof that Garcia had lied about his 1998 SALN and cleared him of perjury.

Garcia, 58, is being held at Camp Crame for plunder, for supposedly amassing P303 million in ill-gotten wealth.

For the promulgation that lasted less than 15 minutes yesterday afternoon, Garcia appeared at the Sandiganbayan

EX-AFP A-13

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

RP rights record under scrutiny

UNHRC starts review of members; Ermita in Geneva to make pitch

By Cynthia D. Balana, Jeremaine Aseng and Michael Lim Ubac

THE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD OF THE PHILIPPINES will come under scrutiny today by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in the first-ever Universal Periodic Review (UPR) being held at UN headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Fifteen other countries will undergo the UPR in the first two-week session until all the 192 UN member states shall have been examined by 2011, after which the process will begin again, the UNHRC said. The Philippines is in the list batch in undergo review.

Aside from questions from representatives of the 47 countries that make up the council, the UNHRC said it accepted reviews from different sources, including the reports of the UN special rapporteurs and written submissions from non-government organizations.

RP ready

For the Philippines, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita will defend the government's human rights record to the UPR.

Before leaving for Geneva on Wednesday, Ermita said the Philippine government was ready for the review.

"We are proud of the achievements we have made in human rights. Like all countries, we cannot say we have a perfect record but we have true-blood programs and policies that are making an impact and this is what the international system wants to see," he said.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Assistant Secretary Claro Cristobal explained the UPR was established under the resolution that created the UNHRC, which replaced the 219 Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) on March 15, 2006.

In the resolution, the UN General Assembly mandated the council to "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfillment by each state of its human rights obligations and commitments in a manner which ensures universality of coverage and equal treatment with respect to all states."

Critics present, too

Several international, regional and Philippine NGOs and civil society groups have sent representatives to the UPR. The representatives cannot address the council but may observe the goings-on.

The council's website (http://www.ohchr.org) lists 21 submissions by NGOs, most of them critical of the human rights record of the Arroyo administration.

Some of these groups formed a coalition called Philippine UPR Watch headed by National Council of Churches in the Philippines secretary general Fr. Rex Reyes Jr.

"We hope the UNHRC will listen to the Filipino people's call for justice and help put a stop to impunity and human rights violations in the country," Reyes said in an e-mailed statement.

Kampanyo Inquirer Tibbs Oñida, a member of Philippine UPR Watch, said in a text message to the Inquirer from Geneva that 30 of their members will participate in a "Shadow UPR," the NGO's version of the review, while 11 others will hold a picket outside the council's Palais Wilson headquarters. Another 15 will host a press conference after the Philippines' turn in the UPR session.

Bahrain first

Reyes said the coalition expects the Philippine government report "will contain its good record but some way it hides the truth about its corruption and other crimes from the public."

"This is why we call on the UNHRC to read through the lines and the list of the Arroyo regime," he said.

For the 1st session of the first cycle, the following was the established order: Bahrain, Ecuador, Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia, Finland, United Kingdom, India, Brazil, Philippines, Algeria, Poland, Netherlands, South Africa, Czech Republic and Argentina.

The Persian Gulf state of Bahrain was the first nation to face scrutiny on Monday.

The 47-member council spent three hours debating Bahrain's rights record, in particular issues relating to foreign workers, freedom of expression and equality of women.

With AFP report

GMA warned against pardoning AFP rebs

By Lolit B. Salaverria and Julie M. Aurelio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO should be careful in deciding whether to pardon the rebel officers convicted of the July 2003 coup as it could encourage other soldiers to engage in military adventurism knowing they can always seek clemency later, said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

"I feel the President will be prudent on this. Otherwise, no misguided element in the military will feel threatened anymore. They will be emboldened," he said.

But so far there has been no indication that the President is considering a grant of executive clemency to the convicted putschists, Gonzalez said.

On Tuesday, nine rebel officers of the so-called the Magdalo group, led by Capts. Gerardo Gambala and Milo Maestrecampo, were convicted of coup d'etat by Makati Judge Oscar Pimentel for the July 2003 uprising's coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny.

Pimentel imposed life sentences on Gambala and Maestrecampo and six to 12-year prison terms on the rest.

Gonzalez said there were also other considerations to take into account in a decision to pardon.

He said that in the history of coup attempts in the country, no perpetrator has ever been convicted until now.

"That is one aspect that has to be looked into because anybody who is misguided will just think that he could just run to the Senate," he said.

Gonzalez also believes that the guilty plea entered by the nine convicted soldiers would affect the case of 22 other rebels who have pleaded not guilty to the coup d'etat charge.

"Surely one other officers [or] by another Magdalo leader, Antonio Trillanes, one or another to determine, remains on trial.

Gonzalez noted that the charge down of those who pleaded guilty listed those who were in conspiracy with them.

"Therefore, matters which have been admitted in effect will stay on the record," he said.

The justice secretary also believes that a pardon would not be taken well by the state prosecutor who worked hard for the conviction, only to have the guilty parties go scot-free.

But prosecutors interviewed after yesterday's hearing said they would not object to a pardon.

"We made them go through the process, we saw their remorse. If there's any chance for them to apply for pardon, why not," said prosecutor Richard Anthony Bulalios.

Bulalios said he and other prosecutors did not see anything wrong with a pardon being contemplated for the nine convicted officers.

"We have seen how they realized that what they did was wrong. The least we could have say objection to the pardon," he said.

Members of the media were barred from the hearing yesterday in which the defense presented former Armed Forces Chief Hortelan Abaya who testified on the events leading up to the military offensive on the Buliok complex in February 2000.

The defense claims that the military offensive to take Buliok, a stronghold of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, was the cause of the grievances of the rebel officers' who occupied the Oakwood Premier Hotel in the Makati commercial center on July 27, 2003.

Magdalo officer free on bail

A MAKATI COURT HAS ORDERED THE RELEASE of a rebel officer involved in the July 2003 failed coup after posting bail money, five years into the case.

Judge Oscar Pimentel, in an order dated April 3, ordered the release of 1st Lt. Lawrence Ilao Joan after the latter posted a bail of P100,000 for his temporary liberty.

Ilao Joan, who is being detained at Fort Bonifacio, will be free to go home to Bulacan, Rizal, after completing the paperwork for bail bail, said assistant state prosecutor Juan Pedro Saneza.

Ilao Joan is with the group of 22 junior officers, who style themselves as the Magdalo group, who are still undergoing trial for the July 2003 failed coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny.

Nine others who pleaded guilty to the coup d'etat charges were convicted early this week.

Only three of the accused rebel officers were detained back in Jose Antonio Trillanes and Captains Milo Maestrecampo and Gerardo Gambala.

Ilao Joan will still be required to attend the hearings, which Pimentel has set for April 21.

Julie M. Aurelio

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NOTICE OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

TO ALL MEMBERS OF PSMBFI:

Notice is hereby given that the GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING and ELECTION of the Board of Trustees, PUBLIC SAFETY MUTUAL BENEFIT FUND, INC. will be held on April 19, 2008 at 9:00 in the morning, at the PSMBFI Function Room, 3rd Floor, PSMBFI Building, No. 318-320 Santolan Road, cor. 1st & 2nd West Crame, Brgy. West Crame, San Juan City.

Naia has 1,500 new trolleys

AIRPORT OFFICIALS ARE hoping the battle for trolleys will soon end at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 with the delivery yesterday of 1,500 new push carts, a donation worth P50 million from the German-based Shopinez Industries.

"We got this as an X-deal. They gave this to us in exchange for their advertisements here.... This is the same one they use in airports all over the world," said Alfonso Cuet, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (Mial).

The trolleys will be divided equally between the arrivals and departure areas, where a combined 21,000 passengers pass through daily. Both locations would sometimes see the terminal running out of trolleys.

The new pushcarts, which officials said can hold around 200 kg, will replace the roughly 1,000 battered trolleys at the Naia 1. The old pushcarts will be transferred to the Manila International Airport after they are given a fresh coat of paint and new rims.

Twelve-person trolleys, large luggage carriers strong enough to carry 750 kg, soon will be delivery.

The new pushcarts, similar to those used in airports in New York, Hong Kong and Singapore, are equipped with trackers that would enable trolley retrievers to keep tabs on the pushcarts.

Shopinez will train airport workers on effective trolley retrieval and help the Mial management to maintain the new pushcarts, according to a four-year agreement. — Nieva Quiamanlo

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CONSPIRACY THEORY

Victims' kin seek reversal of Villarosa acquittal

By Lelia B. Salaverria

SINCE A CONSPIRACY TO KILL THE QUINTOS brothers existed, all the participants should have been convicted.

The family of Michael and Paul Quintos made the argument in seeking the reversal of the Court of Appeals' acquittal last month of former Mayor Oscar Orencio Villarosa and three others in the killings.

In the motion for reconsideration they filed **separately** in the appellate court for Michael, who was single, his parents also said that it appeared from the way the case was going that the acquittal of the four was certain.

The family of Paul Quintos, who was married with children, will file a separate motion for reconsideration.

Aside from Villarosa, Ramora Bulwa Baligasa, Golito Mastura and Mando Tobias were acquitted and ordered freed by the appellate court.

The court, on the other hand, upheld the convictions of Ramora Eduardo Hermano, Marcelito Mancico and Jesse Trigood who were sentenced to 40 years in prison for each count of murder and ordered to pay damages to the Quintos' heirs.

VILLAROSA

Hermano, Mancico and Trigood, in two separate motions for reconsideration they also filed in the Court of Appeals, questioned the affirmation of their guilt.

The court had ruled that Hermano's confession implicating all seven men in the December 1997 killing of the Quintos brothers was admissible, but could not be used to pin down Villarosa and the three others because it was uncorroborated by other evidence.

Hermano confessed to being the gunman and admitted being present at the Oct. 7, 1997, meeting during which Villarosa allegedly discussed killing Michael.

In its motion, Michael's family said the appellate court erred when it stated that the rules of court require that the participation of a coconspirator named in the statement of another conspirator must be proved by other evidence. They said only the statement of a conspiracy must be shown by separate evidence.

"In this case, the statement of a conspiracy has been sufficiently shown by independent evidence, namely, the eyewitnesses who testified that Hermano, Mancico, Trigood and other persons served as one and in concert to kill the coconspiring brothers," Michael's family said.

They also said the court's ruling that the extrajudicial statement made by Hermano was not enough to convict the four men was "not true, incomplete and misleading."

In the first place, they said, Hermano made a judicial statement to the Manbusao court, aside from the extrajudicial one he made to the National Bureau of Investigation.

They said Hermano's statements were corroborated by Orlando Jerusio, who had been arrested earlier in connection with the murders, in the latter's own sworn statements.

Olympics to ensure China won't bully RP, says solon

By Norman Bordadora

PALAWAN REP. ANTONIO Alvarez, the congressman with jurisdiction over the municipality of Kalayaan, yesterday said the Beijing Olympic Games will prevent China from resorting to bullying tactics against the Philippines over the issue of the latter's archipelagic baselines.

Alvarez said the line raised by some Philippine officials of having to go to war with China if the archipelagic baselines law will reclaim the Kalayaan Islands Group inside the territorial lines inaccessible.

Officials from the executive department has asked Congress to just come up with a baselines bill that will only cover the Kalayaan group as an offshore territory or a "regime of islands" outside the territory lines around the main archipelago.

"Congress should do what is right. Put the Kalayaan inside the baseline and if other countries don't like it then they can register their opposition in the right way and in the proper forum, the way civilized nations do," Alvarez said.

"That's the way to do it rather than surrender the claims right from the start to us or of civilization, "he said.

The Beijing Olympics has put China in its best behavior. There's so much stake to the Games for China on with any improper action that will make it look like a bully in the eyes of the world," Alvarez said.

Correction

IN THE APRIL 10 ISSUE, the front-page banner story—"NPA plans to resist selling price of rice"—misspelled the name of the administrator of the National Food Authority. The NFA administrator is Jessup—not Jesse—Navarro.

11 days to go before EARTH DAY

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, April 11, 2008
2nd Week of Easter
Annunciation

1st Reading: Acts 9:1-20
Gospel: John 6:52-59

The Jews were arguing among themselves, "How can this man give us flesh to eat?" So Jesus replied, "Truly, I say to you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

"My flesh is really food and my blood is drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood, live in me and I in them, just as the living Father sent me and I have life from the Father, so whoever eats me will have life from me. This is the bread which came down from heaven; unlike that of your ancestors, who ate and later died. Those who eat this bread will live forever."

Jesus spoke in this way in Capernaum when he taught them in the synagogue.

Commentary

Those who heard Jesus could not believe that one body and blood. The flesh of which Jesus spoke could not have been His very body and blood.

Jesus understands their way of thinking and answers their objections in firm saying that he does give His very flesh and blood as food and drink, His body and blood are sacrificed upon the cross and its made present through the memorial of the Holy Eucharist. He likening unto the doctrine of the Lord's real, substantial presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

'Divide and rule'

NO LESS THAN THE chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines has been making overtures to the junior officers implicated in the foiled February 2006 coup plot in an attempt to break the group apart, a lawyer of the officers has charged.

Lawyer Trixie Cruz-Angeles said on eminency of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. spoke to the Army Scout Rangers, including her client Capt. Rolex Gumtalloy, who are under detention for their alleged role in the coup attempt, at least twice last week.

"It was an attempt to divide the group," Angeles said, referring to the 28 alleged coup plotters who included Scout Rangers leader Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and the Marines' Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda and Col. Ariel Querubin.

Angeles identified the eminency as Army Maj. Cristobal Pema who is cohabiting with the chief of staff's sister.

Pema visited Gumtalloy and his fellow Scout Rangers Capoyan Abunawan, Nonderick Sales, Ingjet Cribe, James Solbita and Joey Ilustrisimo at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Detachment where they are being held, according to sources who spoke anonymously citing security concerns.

"There was no definite offer made but the visits appeared like someone was trying to test the waters," one of the sources said.

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Air Force to repair airstrip on Pag-asa isle in Spratlys

THE PHILIPPINE AIR Force will be making repairs on the eroded airstrip of Pag-asa Island, the country's most tangible claim to the contested Spratly islands.

Col. Pedro Rivera, commander of the 330th Aviation Engineering Wing, said military engineers are set to begin repairs in phases of the 1,2km-meter Rancudo Runway, which has been damaged by use and the force of wave currents.

Rivera said repairs on an inundated portion at the southwest side of the runway are the priority and are expected to begin by the third quarter, using a P6.6-million fund allocated by the Armed Forces in August 2008.

"The southwest area already poses a hazard to planes that land and take off as we have to build a seawall there," Rivera said.

The planned repairs will be the most extensive renovation work on the Pag-asa runway since it was built in May 1975. Minor "resurfacing" work and runway markings were done in 2000, but repairs on the eroded patch have been delayed because shipping construction materials to the island is difficult due to shallow waters and surrounding sandbars. Government officials have also been unable to send a team to the island to assess the damage.

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The Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) has approved the following toll fees for implementation effective April 21, 2008.

CLASS 1 (Light Vehicles) 2.00

Type	Balanga/Orion	Hermosa	Porac	Clark South	Clark Logistics	Clark Gate B	Clark Gate A	Concepcion	San Miguel	Tarlac
Type										
Balanga/Orion	34.00									
Hermosa	61.00	27.00								
Porac	89.00	44.00	27.00							
Clark South	109.00	65.00	48.00	20.00						
Clark Logistics	113.00	68.00	51.00	24.00	3.00					
Clark South B	126.00	84.00	68.00	41.00	17.00	6.00				
Clark South A	133.00	99.00	82.00	55.00	31.00	11.00	5.00			
Concepcion	144.00	120.00	93.00	64.00	53.00	32.00	24.00	21.00		
San Miguel	172.00	148.00	111.00	84.00	83.00	62.00	54.00	48.00	45.00	
Tarlac	181.00	138.00	120.00	93.00	73.00	69.00	61.00	56.00	46.00	10.00

CLASS 2 (Buses) 4.00

Type	Balanga/Orion	Hermosa	Porac	Clark South	Clark Logistics	Clark South B	Clark South A	Concepcion	San Miguel	Tarlac
Type										
Balanga/Orion	49.00									
Hermosa	112.00	74.00								
Porac	176.00	129.00	84.00							
Clark South	217.00	170.00	93.00	41.00						
Clark Logistics	224.00	174.00	102.00	48.00	7.00					
Clark South B	240.00	193.00	126.00	64.00	23.00	16.00				
Clark South A	244.00	199.00	134.00	76.00	29.00	22.00	6.00			
Concepcion	268.00	240.00	164.00	117.00	70.00	64.00	47.00	41.00		
San Miguel	294.00	264.00	221.00	147.00	124.00	120.00	103.00	97.00	56.00	
Tarlac	343.00	313.00	241.00	186.00	144.00	139.00	125.00	117.00	75.00	19.00

CLASS 3 (Heavy Vehicles) 4.00

Type	Balanga/Orion	Hermosa	Porac	Clark South	Clark Logistics	Clark South B	Clark South A	Concepcion	San Miguel	Tarlac
Type										
Balanga/Orion	72.00									
Hermosa	163.00	113.00								
Porac	264.00	193.00	81.00							
Clark South	324.00	234.00	143.00	61.00						
Clark Logistics	334.00	244.00	153.00	71.00	10.00					
Clark South B	360.00	289.00	177.00	96.00	35.00	25.00				
Clark South A	369.00	299.00	186.00	103.00	44.00	34.00	9.00			
Concepcion	401.00	360.00	246.00	147.00	106.00	96.00	71.00	62.00		
San Miguel	513.00	444.00	332.00	221.00	187.00	179.00	155.00	146.00	84.00	
Tarlac	544.00	473.00	361.00	280.00	218.00	208.00	184.00	175.00	113.00	29.00

For Lost and/or Damaged Card, the motorist has to pay for the furthest distance plus the cost of the Smart Card and incidental cost.

The above toll fees are based on the audited Project Cost as of December 31, 2007.
Any interested user of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway shall have the right to file within a period of ninety (90) days after the date of publication of this Notice, a petition with the Toll Regulatory Board (2/F Integrated Bar of the Philippines Building, Doña Julia Vargas Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City) for a review of the above toll fees.

SO ORDERED. Pasig City, April 9, 2008.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(SGD) MANUEL G. IMPERIAL
Executive Director
Toll Regulatory Board

SUMMER DESTINATION

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Lito Atienza makes refreshing stopover on the La Mesa to personally inspect the facilities of its Ecopark in Quezon City. He is accompanied by environmental advocate Gina Lopez, chairman and president of ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc., Benny Kalikasan, overseer of the Ecopark.

3 senators opt to ship IPU junket

THREE SENATORS have decided to skip the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) general assembly in South Africa amid criticism that it looked like a junket time for lawmakers.

But Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., who heads the chamber's contingent, defended the trip, saying it was a "good opportunity" to seek advice from lawmakers from oil-rich countries on how to kick the booming food crisis.

"We have to maximize our membership in this prestigious organization. They [representatives from developed countries] can share their experience in irrigation, coastal resource management, catalyze farm practices and appropriate crop nutrition and protection methods," he said.

Joining Villar are Senators Francis Pangilinan, Jinggoy Estrada, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Gregorio Honasan, Alan Peter and Pia Cayetano.

Three of the 13 senators originally invited—Senators Panfilo Lacson, Francis Escudero and Ramon Revilla Jr.—have opted not to join the trip.

No need to go

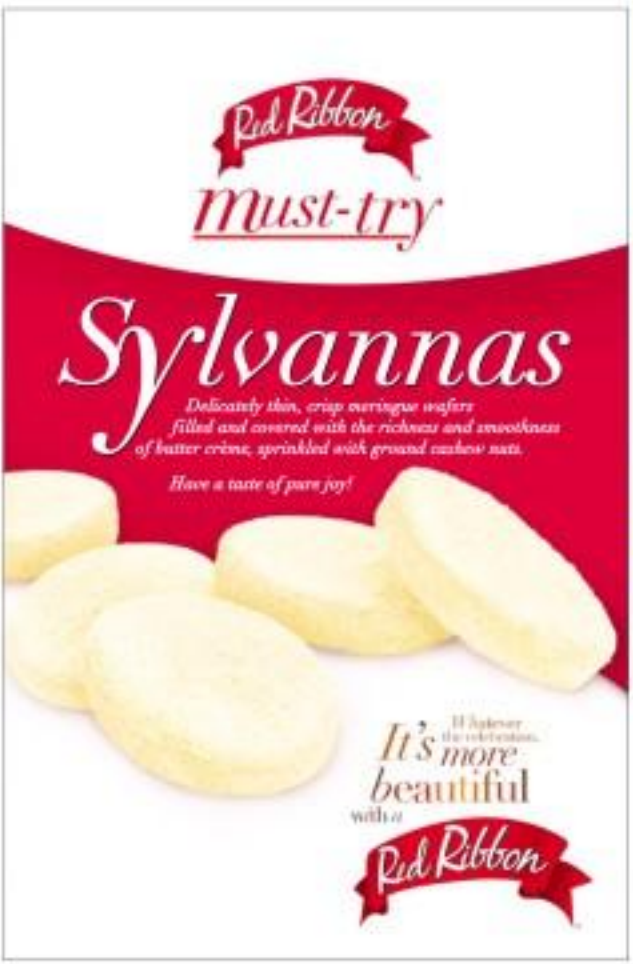
Lacson was non-approval on his decision to snub the event.

"There are enough lions and crocodiles in Mindanao, even more than enough 'two-no evil, hear-no evil, speak-no-evil' monkeys in the Cabinet. I need not go to South Africa to see them. The face is, I am not going," he said in a statement.

But no principled stand was for Revilla as he was leaving from the rest other senators.

Revilla said he was on personally invited to the wedding of his daughter planned for next month. Escudero has decided to stay because he had to babysit his daughters.

"I am out of Africa and will just be here in Manila overlooking in the summer heat like the millions others. I can't take a leave from my babysitting duties on account of a hold-departure order by my wife," Escudero said. (Ellalyn Gregorio)



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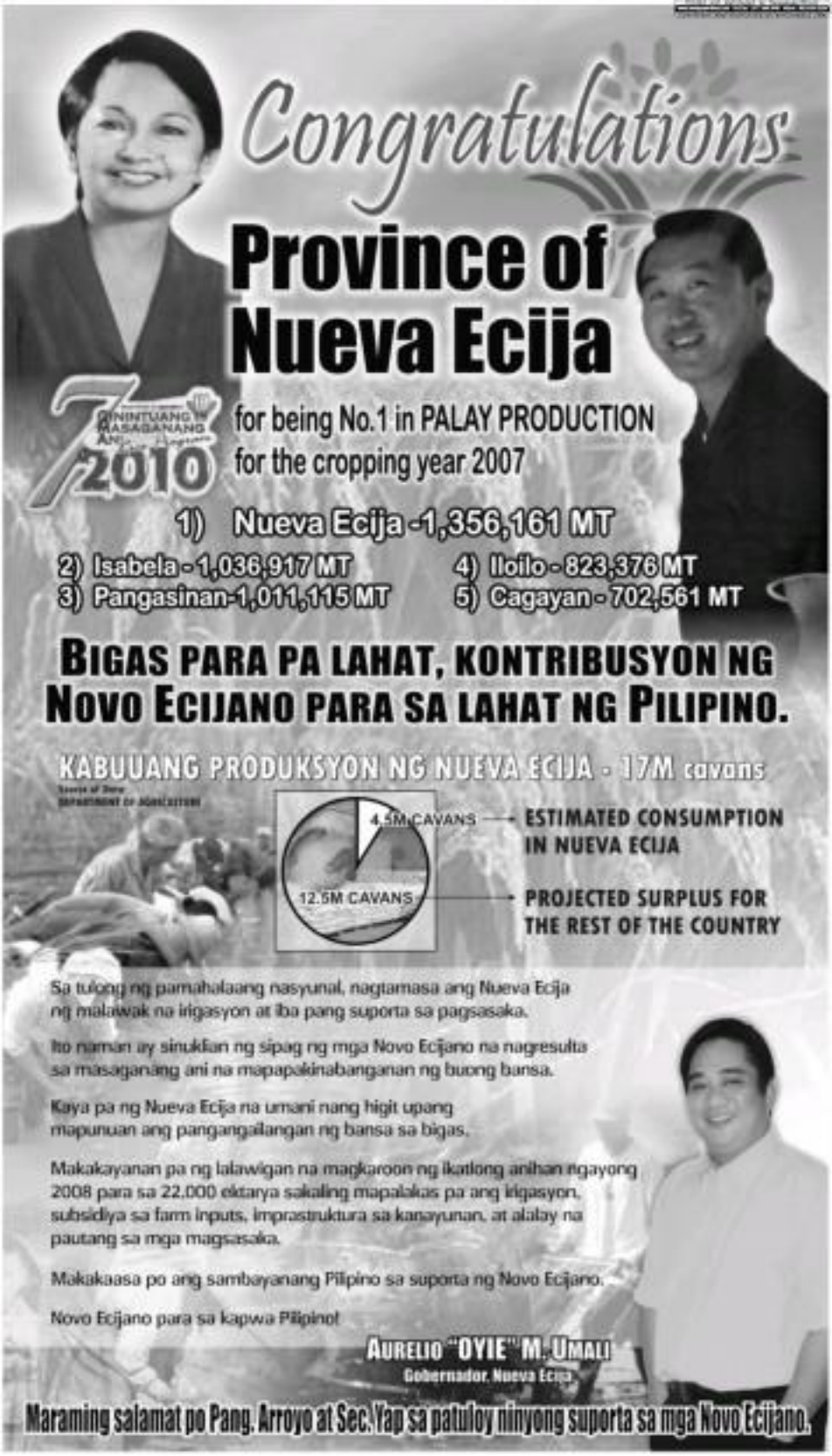
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Gobernador, Nueva Ecija
Maraming salamat po Pang. Arroyo at Sec. Yap sa patuloy ninyong suporta sa mga Novo Ecijano.

Conversion of Veterans hit

By Jerome Aning

A MILITARY GROUP of government employees yesterday said the plans to convert the Veterans Memorial Medical Complex (VMMC) into an upscale residential area was part of a bigger design to "ruthlessly" remove the public lands of Quezon City where many government offices and hospitals are situated, into exclusive residential and commercial areas.

The Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said the development under the proposed QC Central Business District (QCCBD) project would result in the relocation of many government offices, overwhelming of civil servants and the privatization of public lands and agencies.

Courage president Ferdinand Gaite said the QCCBD is a wholesale privatization of public land scattered at the North and East Triangle areas, or about half of the so-called Quadrangle area that straddles Edsa.

The Quadrangle was envisioned to be the National Government Center when Quezon City was still the capital of the country.

Gaite said the veterans, employees and patients of the VMMC hospital have reason to feel alarmed as, "based on information they have received, government offices and other hospitals located in the North and East Triangle would either be privatized or transferred.

A project flaw is being financed by the World Bank, the QCCBD provides for land to be converted for mixed use...commercial, residential and industrial. The residential area is estimated to occupy 20.7 hectares of the 250-hectare area covered by the development plan.

President Mayquin Arroyo issued Executive Order 620 on May 6, 2007 to expedite the implementation of the project by creating the Task Force Committee composed of the Quezon City mayor, the general manager of the National Housing Authority and a representative from the Office of the President.

Gaite said that regional offices in the area would be relocated to the proposed new national government center in the Commonwealth, Litex and Diliman areas for their north-of-the-city.

Gaite said the planned transfer of these offices has become a source of worry among government employees.

"Nervous sila sa pag-transfer ng mga opisina nila sa bagong lugar (They are nervous in the transfer of their offices to the new location)," he said.

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CEBU PACIFIC

Senators split on inhibition of SC justices

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

SENATORS THEMSELVES ARE DIVIDED on the issue of pursuing a motion to ask Supreme Court Justices Antonio Eduardo Nachura, Renato Corona and Presbitero Velasco to inhibit themselves from the Senate case against Commission on Higher Education Chair Romulo Neri.

Senators Francis Pangilinan and Panfilo Lacson want the three justices to recuse themselves because of their alleged partisanship in Malacañang.

But Senators Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero and Richard Gordon are wary of antagonizing a co-equal branch of government.

The Senate last Tuesday filed a motion asking the SC to reverse its decision upholding Neri's right to invoke executive privilege and refrain from answering questions on what President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered him to do after learning of the bribery attempts in connection with the NBN-ZTE deal.

A motion for inhibition could be filed as early as next week against Nachura, Velasco and Corona, Pangilinan said.

Pangilinan said Reina voted in favor of Neri even if he was not yet part of the tribunal when the case was being heard. Neri has reportedly played golf with Velasco and Corona's wife in reportedly a presidential appointee.

Lacson said the inhibition against Reina, Velasco and Corona was valid because "it has basis."

But some of their colleagues question the advisability of filing such a motion.

While he was not opposed to the motion, Escudero said it was best left to the decision of the Senate's lawyers without any formal resolution.

"It's too risky to file that and get the ire of the justices," he said.

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Jailed Japanese apologizes again

By Jeannette I. Andrade

ATI ILOILO! Japanese held at the Bureau of Immigration (BI) detention facility in Bicutan, Taguig, following a complaint that he had hit the daughter of Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia expressed remorse for the "unfortunate" incident yesterday.

Speaking through his lawyer, Immigration (BI) detention center restrictions prevented the Philippine Daily Inquirer from interviewing him directly, Isao Tanaka, 63, said three days in the custody of immigration officers and his possible deportation were too much for a prisoner he claimed was first-timer in his native land.

"Tanaka has had enough. He has not...feared enough to jail. It will not happen again. If only he could be forgiven for what he did," Tanaka's lawyer Vanessa Mendoza said.

In his counter-affidavit, submitted to BI hearing officer and Legal Officer Ulysses Tablizo, Tanaka stated apologetic to Atty. Ma. Esperanza Christina Cadiz, whom he had "inconvenienced," an owner of the "intimate counterpartner" of the incident.

"Extremely apologize to Ms. Cadiz, to all Filipinos and to this beautiful country which I considered my second home and which gave me so much personal and professional benefits and opportunities," Tanaka stated in his affidavit.

Tanaka denied that he ever punched Cadiz on the back in the April 8 incident at the southwing of the NAIA terminal 3 arrival area, where passengers of flight PR 848 from Cebu were waiting for their luggage.

"The incident on 10 arose (from) a misunderstanding between us, who were both in a hurry to get our baggage," he said.

Wilcon Ranks Among Kohler's Top Distributors in Asia Pacific

Following the attainment of being the "Most Outstanding Retailer in the Philippines" as being a "Category Killer" — awarded during the last Philippine Retailer's Association conference — Wilcon Builders' Depot has received international recognition from one of the worldwide leaders in building products, Kohler, Co.

Wilcon has been given the recognition as being one of the "Top Kohler Distributors in the Asia Pacific for 2007" during the prestigious 2008 Kohler Asia Pacific Distributor Conference held at Sunway Resort Hotel and Spa in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on March 14 to 16, 2008.

Kohler has come to recognize Wilcon's passion, commitment and dedication in introducing and promoting its first-class product lines in the Philippines. Likewise, the internationally renowned company acknowledged Wilcon's efforts in building trust with customers, continuous improvements in product promotion and services while posting solid sales and market share gains.

Accepting the prestigious honor and award are: Chief Financial Officer Ms. Lorraine Belo and Chief Operating Officer Ms. Rosemarie Ong which was presented by Kohler's the esteemed Executive Vice President Mr. David Kohler with Asia Pacific Regional Sales Director Mr. Adam Quek.

In addition to honoring Kohler's top distributors, the conference included insights on global future design trends from both Kohler and international industry experts. These design trends were represented in the Bunched 2008 products which "grows Kohler's and Wilcon's commitment in bringing the finest in not just high quality products, but innovative design and function.

This accomplishment is considered one of the key milestones in Wilcon's history; further enhancing its reputation as one of the country's top construction supply companies.

Wilcon will continue to move forward in becoming a company that offers more innovative concepts, ideas, products and services to its clients.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Vol. 23 No. 103

Torched

EDITORIAL

THE INTERNATIONAL RELAY OF THE OLYMPIC flame was meant to be a grand passage through some of the world's great cities, to dramatize the unity that animates the Olympic spirit and to herald the advent of Beijing as the newest capital of the Olympic movement. Instead, it has turned into a public relations nightmare.

In London, protesters almost managed to grab the Olympic torch. In Paris, the torch had to be extinguished and hoisted in a secure bus, to prevent it from street demonstrators. In San Francisco, a horde of protesters forced the city government to shelter the torch in a warehouse and then use a completely different route. What will happen in Buenos Aires, we can only guess.

But the damage has been done. Not to the Olympic movement, because protesters and public strike have learned to distinguish between the Games and the politics of the host country. But to China's image abroad. Coming on the heels of the violent riots or brutal crackdown in Tibet (the choice of emphasis is almost ideological), the torch relay has revealed, yet again, a disturbing side to China's politics.

The Tibet issue has festered for half a century; China's degree of influence over North Korea, Burma (Myanmar) and Sudan has been a concern and an object of speculation of the community of nations for many years. The protests that welcomed the torch relay are therefore not a surprise; in fact, they were expected. And they became inevitable after the severe eruption of violence in Tibet.

What is disturbing is the Chinese national government's hard-line reaction. Despite the general freedom now enjoyed by ordinary Chinese citizens since the reforms known collectively as the "opening," and in spite of the greater attention now focused on China because of the Olympics, China's government has responded to the protests in a manner that can only be described as self-destructive.

In China, the broadcast of cable news network CNN is blocked when the news turns to the protests that have hounded the Olympic torch relay. The front pages of the major newspapers, as illustrated in the case of state-owned China Daily, closely follow the relay but omit or downplay any mention of the protests abroad.

To be sure, public opinion in China—so far as this elusive thing can be enunciated—is solidly supportive of the Beijing Olympics and strongly outraged over the protests that have interrupted the progress of the Olympic torch. For the ordinary Chinese citizen, the protests abroad are nothing but a deliberate attempt to humiliate the Chinese nation.

What China's government has done is to ride this wave of nationalism, and even to stoke it. In other words, at the exact time it is poised to lead an internationalist movement of a scale and with a membership Mao could only have dreamt of, China is cultivating a nationalism of the worst, us-against-the-world kind.

Seven years ago, when it was still bidding for the privilege to host the summer Olympics, China pledged greater openness in the conduct of its affairs. To a considerable extent, that promise has been kept. How unfortunate, then, that on the eve of the Olympics, China's national government will fall back to its old ways.

In attempts to demonize the Dalai Lama, to turn him into the mastermind of an armed revolutionary movement and blame him for the current troubles in Tibet, is a particularly vicious example. (To borrow the language of the Olympics, this attempt is most unsportsmanlike.) The offer of peace, as detailed in newscasts and news pages, is absolutely non-credible. And yet the Chinese government persists—as though the rest of the world were a media audience waiting or willing to be manipulated.

Enough of these games. If China is ready to take a leading role in the community of nations, it must learn to be open not only to market forces but also and especially to international opinions. Those prominent living the streets in some of the world's great cities should not be ignored or their very existence denied; their concerns—the freedom to choose, the right to a life of dignity, the way of peace—are themselves an eternal flame.

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Only P400,000 left of P10M paid for NPC mural

I GOT A INSIDE UPDATE ON THE CASES FILED against the officers of the National Press Club by the Government Service Insurance System. There are three pending cases, not four.

1. Criminal case for qualified theft and breaking includes Odette Alcantara, an hacker, among defendants. The parties have already filed their respective affidavits. The case is still pending resolution by the Office of the City Prosecutor of Manila. The feeds on reported being intimidated not to file the case.

Note to Boots and judges: Do not be afraid. The NPC is not behind the present officers in these cases. On the contrary, it is embarrassed and mortified and wants to throw out the officers. The NPC wants you to do your duty and see to it that justice is done and the guilty are punished.

2. Civil case for recovery of the Hanamaki mural (and accompanying portrait); also includes Odette.

The court has issued a writ of preliminary attachment in favor of the GSIS which, in turn, has attached the bank accounts of NPC and its officers. In the process, it discovered that of the P10-million payment for the mural, which the NPC officers claim is still intact in NPC's P9M account, only P400,000 is left. The court declined to issue the preliminary writ of replevin on the ground that it had already issued a writ of attachment, but the GSIS moved for a reconsideration of this order.

Now we have an idea of the character of the present NPC officers and why they sold the mural. They must explain (and the members must demand an explanation) where P9.6 million of the proceeds went.

3. Civil case for damages.

The preliminary conference has been terminated and the parties have been directed to file their respective position papers. Thereafter, the case will be deemed submitted for resolution.

I have about the same report on the history of the stolen property, when he/she is finally identified?

* * *

President Macapagal-Arroyo is still at her old tricks, bribing people while clobbering them in the bank. As the Batasan Day views last Thursday, she signed a law increasing to P5,000 the monthly pension for war veterans. Big deal! She also announced that a Philippine delegation will go to the United States to lobby for US pensions for the veterans. Now in force: bountiful words-written by speech-writers, but listen to what you do not hear and is being kept secret.

While extolling these same war veterans at the Bataan Day rites, she was stabbing them from the back. How? The veterans will be deprived of their hospital fee, the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC), near the Trinoma shopping mall in Quezon City, will be sold by the government in a land development, to be replaced by high-rise condominiums and business offices.

The hospital and golf course do not even belong to the Philippine government. It was built by the US government and donated to the Filipino war veterans. The donation has a provision that it cannot be sold and alienated. And it is not even included in the development plan for QC's North and East Triangles which will be turned into the city's business district.

But the President issued an executive order including VMMC in the development plan, as an excuse to sell it. I do not think an executive order can override a condition in a deed of donation. And I think the veterans should protest and the Senate should investigate this latest caper of the administration. We cannot allow this to happen.

The government also tried to sell Camp Aguinaldo and Quezon Institute but it was told that these were donated properly and that the deeds of donation have a condition that if no longer needed by the donees, they should revert to the donors. The government also tried to sell the Manila Sending Bank Foundation on North Triangle but the BSRA stood because it has an existing lease. BSRA won.

That is why the government has issued an executive order in the PMRC case. You have to hand it to the Arroyo administration. If it does not succeed this time, second or third time, it tries and tries again until it succeeds.

The government is also selling the National Center for Mental Health in Mandaluyong, the nearby Welfareville compound, and the BIBMP Protector compound in Port Irdago.

Why is the Arroyo administration on a selling spree? Because it is going out in two ways. Its officials are preparing for their future. Make hay while we are still in power. What are we in power for? Also, there will be a presidential election in 2010 and candidates will need plenty of campaign funds. The selling spree is in aid of elections.

Are we going to allow the administration to sell everything that belongs to the people just to ensure the election of its candidates?

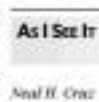
* * *

Interview the five directors of the fifth Power Condominium (PASEC), a high-rise building in Legaspi Village, Makati, still have its board meeting. They better look closely at the activities of some of their members. They may be playing house with the money of the unit owners.

For instance, three of the directors are installed the services of its security agency to give the contract to another agency whose chief happens to be a close associate of the PASEC chairman. The fee per guard of the new security agency is P13,000 every 15 days. Wow! Obviously, the intention is to increase the agency commission.

The interesting thing is that the home address of one of the top directors is the same address as the new security agency. The director has multiple jobs after the retainer consel of PASEC.

Is this top director making money for himself and for his security agency? I see the association dues of PASEC!



As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Disability rights, forgotten human rights

THE PHILIPPINE SENATE WILL SOON BE called upon to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These are the forgotten human rights, surely the stuff of headlines, banners and mass protests but, when violated, cause pain and sadness just the same. We must support our senators in the righteous work of ratifying this Convention, and express them to palpable and unmistakable terms. Why are disability rights often relegated to the legislative backburner?

First, disability rights are most often violated in urban (a.k.a. the "private sphere" that does not involve the state. When one deal with others, more typical human rights violations, it is the government that is first and foremost "the usual suspect." As long as the government's hand is not implicated, it seems, the attitude is that discrimination on the basis of disability is a conscious-doer's problem.

Consider censorship and its chilling effect on free speech, for instance, and you might think of, say, the secretary of justice and his "media-advisories." On the other hand, when it comes to respecting the rights of persons with disabilities, the state is typically not to intrude in private person; it can be a bank that refuses to allow a blind person to deposit a P1,000 remand check; it can be a 5-star hotel that initially balks at building a wheelchair ramp because it didn't "blend" with the design of its driveway. It can be a cab driver not organized to wait for a paraplegic's wheelchair to be folded and kept in the trunk.

I learned that recently Cebu Pacific—and I'm otherwise a fan of this airline, I hasten to add, because they bought into the regressive, overintense of booking flights on the Internet—refused to allow 10 deaf passengers on a flight to Boracay. All 10 were already seated inside the plane, when the crew told them to disembark, saying their safety could not be guaranteed, to give had to be properly accompanied in order to be treated as "regular passengers." If unnecessarily, "he/she may be accepted the carriage provided he/she can take care of himself/herself in the ground and in flight."

The irony was that four members of the group were visiting Americans who had flown all the way to the Philippines on their own, without a hitch, and had demonstrably met the internationally stringent standards of airline airlines. They had come to attend the grand centennial of the Philippine School for the Deaf, the oldest such school in the Philippines. They hadn't been apprised of the policy in advance. Worst of all, though they were promised a full refund, what they received was short by P600, the agent's service fee apparently. (In the end, only two of the passengers were allowed to board.)

Incredibly, there are functional grounds for exclusion. Cebu Pacific, for instance, can cite the need to communicate to the deaf passengers in case of an emergency, which brings us to the third reason: equal treatment is not non-free. In the case of the deaf passengers, it entails to flier a companion (one) in the house by the deaf passenger) or administrative arrangements to meet the specific disability (one to be borne by the airline).

The misconception, however, is that the only, or more infamous human rights violations are different: that they always entail state action, cannot be explained by any practical rationale whatsoever and are out-free. That is not true. (Note may be removed by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, but they must also be ratified by Congress or school administrators—except we can parse the text of state action and ask "What are the violated rights?" rather than "Who violated his rights?" Historically, social discrimination resulted in the law (the inequalities in education, opportunities and wealth that existed in—to—except now we know better, and know in our hearts that bigotry can always parade itself as race-neutral and functional. And finally all equality claims entail costs: maternity leave—it takes a few months' paid leave and can wreak havoc with personnel management—except that now we have arrived at a consensus that mothers have a right to be in the workplace, and that we must all step in to ensure that plans, be they sake as well as our consciences.

I recall an earlier version a piece titled "The Disabled" and, in the introductory added," and called upon the "values and healthy to see themselves in the closet, say in the wheelchairs, of persons with disabilities," since we all are merely "having our time until our (new) powers to the next world." Or, as the Sporting Index, the losses and points outside" and the inevitable disabilities come upon all lives.

In the Philippine campaign to ratify the Disability Rights Convention, the real impediments to cancel attitudes and philosophy. Our message is simple: we, the persons of the Philippines, speaking through Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, that equality is "treated not merely on charity or accommodation, but on justice for all" and that there are "legal rights (that are) more pointed (not just moral) consequences (not as a consequence of law and justice."

The Disability Rights Convention asserts the universal claim to equal dignity, but now we fight the battle in the trenches in Manila. Here we find deep-seated cultural biases, a combination of fear, ignorance, indifference and fatalistic resignation. We precisely because the local culture is largely inhospitable to claims by persons with disabilities, precisely for that reason we must assert their claims by law and, pierce the veil of state action and ask "What are the violated rights?" rather than "Who violated

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Harvest of wrath

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

Senate joint committees, chaired by former Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, Jr., and chaired also the 17-20-old-Ambrosio Padilla and headed by Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Panfilo Lacson, are to look into the 2008 technical campaign of President Arroyo.

Upholding in the administration of the "Kung ng Daginggan," the President said, "No endless investigations will put rice on the table, computers in classrooms, or clinics in barangays." This is a cheap shot. Real-time monitoring on the side of the poor—setting up long lines by the side of the road—will not help the hungry people when the supply runs short in the coming lean months of September-December.

Unless the supply problem can be immediately, we face a disastrous harvest of trends from hungry masses storming the NFA [National Food Authority] warehouses rather than a bumper crop. Re-creating supposedly of unscrupulous and rapacious "alien" traits (Chinese) can't explain the growing hunger by the poor. Hunger is the rage from exploding in its last and we believe it is the target.

The new deficit and prices present the most exacting challenge yet to President Arroyo's crisis management skills and reserves. From the intimate view she has limited her list, she has not proved to be the best person. The out-appointees have been taken out of the shelves and cleaned off—including massive rice importation to fill the domestic production shortfalls, monopoly of subsidized rice sale by the NFA, and new commitment of money to increase the production of palay and rice. There is no reason to be sure here that, in the face of the skyrocketing rice prices, these stopgap measures can arrest the escalating unrest over food scarcity and high prices from becoming the flashpoints of mass by the hungry as had happened recently in Indonesia and Egypt.

Natural calamities—such as typhoons, flooding, earthquakes—drive out the president as in panic or meddler measures to alleviate distress. They put a premium on the President. This evaluation even inappropriate pronouncements such as push public satisfaction ratings in extraordinary highs. They provide leadership with political capital to regain some popularity.

For every dollar the government makes to lend all the money on the streets, one dollar goes, since the encouraging whether's a massive improvement this, allowing the prices sector to import this, not having the depot entirely to the NFA, easing by half the tariff on rice imports, or raising the price of rice to encourage farmers to plant more. All these provide incentives to bust the producers and also to reduce to huge losses on the subsidies. This last mentioned, intended measure, is a formula for sparking public unrest, as it would put up the price above the current NFA ceiling.

The government's instinctive response to stabilize the supply is unsophisticated by Central Bank, is $1.3 billion—nearly one percent of the gross national product. This puts the government in a bind. It's make supply the rice producers, also make angry the consumers, mainly the poor who comprise 60 percent of the beneficiaries of NFA rice. It is the reliability of the prices that we have to watch to be sure those months for signs of hungry and angry masses marching to the streets.

Commercial rice, not NFA rice, is the combination of the NFA has no rations from three kilos to one kilo to prevent shortage. Already commercial rice price has risen above their P40 a kilo in three months, and is expected to reach P50 before this year has ended.

Email: amdoronila@amosat.com.ph

Losing a kidney

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

JUST LAST MONTH, MY HOMEY "DONDON," of more friendly fantasy "voodoos," gathered at the Philippine Memorial Medical Center in Pasay City to undergo a kidney transplant. Dondon had to donate from the Philippine Society of Nephrology.

Why? Did the climb to Quezon Bounce, says Dr. Benita Padilla, PSN vice president and one of the authors of the study, "because the same reason a great number of LDKDP—living non-related organ providers—had from the previous, "in fact, we found more than 300 are, in just three months in Quezon," says Padilla. Needless to say there seems are among the poor as in the average.

Wanting to find out "the health and economic status of organ vendors" after the transplant, the researchers interviewed and examined 107 subjects, all of them men with ages ranging from 19 to 47 years, with an average age of 29. Asked what motivated them to give up a kidney, 52.5 percent cited a need for money, primarily to pay for some debts. Expressing a desire to help the potential recipient? At the time of the organ "donation," most of them were farmers or simple drivers, with an average household monthly income of P3,000. In exchange for one kidney, they received an average of P170,000, though it wasn't clear if all of them received the entire amount promised.

From what happened, with the help of Dr. Bell Jr. in the Philippine Society of Nephrology, the PSN, the outcome of the study was clear: on average, the men experienced impaired kidney function months after the donation, with almost half reporting that they felt physically weaker, while 17 of the men said they had suffered from hypertension. Six found increased levels of hypertension, even among young adults," added Dr. Padilla. Most said they would not have sold their kidney if they knew the consequences, while almost all of them would not recommend that others sell a kidney.

* * *

THE EVIDENCE of the study in Lopez, Quezon, especially the men's modest, and their health and economic status after the transplant, perhaps, those words of those men around the country.

"From the residents," states Dr. Chua, "we are seeing a steep rise in the number of living non-related organ providers." She said DOH administrative order, which was recently amended, had put a stop to the LDKDP, some time, but right now "half or more than half of all kidney transplants here are non-related donors."

"We want to make sure this is clear," said Chua in an interview. "We are not against organ donations per se. What we are against is trafficking in and sale of organs."

Ideally, said Dr. Chua, a person suffering from end-stage renal disease or chronic kidney would go through a kidney transplant using a donated kidney from a blood relative or even an "emotionally related" individual, such as a spouse or friend. Advances in the medical field have helped make matching a lot easier, and although of course the closer the match, the better the chances of a good outcome.

Failing the availability of an organ from a living donor, a person in need of a kidney would have organ from a deceased donor. But statistics gathered by the Philippine Renal Disease Registry show that the number of transplants from deceased donors has remained fairly static since 1997. And, while the Philippine Organ Donation donor health-nationalist chose from deceased donors, among living donors there is an increasing, steeply rising, number of non-related donors.

* * *

IT all the surgical complexities made possible by medical advances, kidney transplantation is one procedure where Filipino surgeons and specialists have gained expertise.

And given the fairly low cost of such procedure done here, it's no wonder the many foreign patients choose to come here, opting over the kidney patients from other countries.

Chua is a physician who has personally performed more than 1,000 kidney transplants, and she is not alone in her expertise. But we might be coming close to a situation like *Le Guin's* fantastic kingdom of enabling bodies and reproductive tales, for though there is a thriving medical technology I'm writing, I am more about a "pregnant man" in the United States, who says he is expecting to deliver in July this year.

Thomas Beatie was born Tracy Lagondino in Hawaii to a Filipino father and a Caucasian mother. In accordance with American norms, he says he grew up feeling he should have been born a man. He married Nancy Gross, "another lesbian," which can be quite serious to the individual finds it difficult adjusting to the body he or she is born into.

A more common term used to refer to such individuals is "transsexual" and, in recent years, "transgender" has also been used. People often prefer "transsexual" with "heterosexual," presuming, for example, that all male homosexuals want to become women but this is inaccurate.

Transsexualism is a disorder of gender identity, which homosexuality refers to sexual orientation. Most male homosexuals are content with being men, just as most lesbians want to remain females. A homosexual male, on the other hand, may actually find himself unhappy with his male body and will choose to become female. Even after surgery, the individual, now female, will continue to be sexually attracted to women, so when we would have a closed sexual bond going through sexual reassignment surgery.

Goldhand? Yes should be, but my view to imagine people like Tracy Lagondino as they grow up, feeling they were born into the wrong body. Modern societies have actually become more open to transsexuals, trying to have people into equal "male" and "female" roles.

That is not the case here. Many societies have recognized transsexuals and transgenders all through history, creating particular roles—usually religious functionaries and healers—where they could serve in the "in-between" category. In the Philippines we had the "bakla," men who dressed as females and performed women's tasks.

Transitions

Surgical transformation of transsexuals is more radical, less fairly recent, intervention. The first recorded case of this kind of surgery was that of Sophia Hartwig, whose physicians were able to alter her genitals in 1882 and transform her to a female at birth.

But it was not until the latter part of the 20th century that such operations became more common. Today there's done in many countries in the world, neighboring Thailand even making us to offer the surgery as part of medical tourism.

The process for male-to-female surgery and "transitions" are not quite uniform. Surgery—which does not involve transplants—is only a part of a long process of sexual reassignment that includes counseling, a trial period where one lives as the "other" sex, and hormonal treatment.

Hesitations are powerful, a male taking estrogen will develop breasts, a female taking testosterone will grow facial hair, and develop a finer complexion. Female transsexuals take testosterone, which can also bring about very dramatic effects, including the growth of unwanted body hair.

The process for female-to-male to-female male-to-female, there's often a long period in which the individual is living

No more sense of nationalism

LETTERS

ON THE EDITORIAL "MONUMENT to deceit," (Inquirer, 4/8/08), who ever issued a permit for the construction of condominium inside the Iadis sandpoint reservation ought to be severely punished.

What's wrong with our public officials? Have they completely lost their sense of propriety and nationalism?

The Subic condominium reminded me of another project that the Koreans wanted to do. That was to build a spa project right on Taal volcano. The project would have meant also destroying lots of trees and polluting the Taal lake. That was indeed shining our hospitality.

But then again, we cannot put all the blame on the Koreans. It is our own officials who have no more respect for our country and our people. All for the love of money. We hope that the Taal project has been scrapped.

If the Koreans only were lodging for their employees, they should put structures all the empty and rotting houses and hotels in Subic. But then the Koreans don't really mean to use the condominiums as they say. Look at what happened to our poor compatriots who accidentally died while working in their establishments. What were their jobs were, they were not given anything to protect them from harm. Worse, the Koreans refused to help their families.

The Koreans should stop insulting our intelligence. If they are not happy where they are staying right now, they should go back to Korea. We are not forcing them to stay in our country.

—LITO MAKILING,
lmk.marcelino@yahoo.com

Let foreigners run our country

IN REFERENCE TO THE EDITORial "Monument to deceit," (Inquirer, 4/8/08), the Inquirer was right to point out that our public officials have sold us out, not only by allowing foreign nationals to circumvent the conservation of noncompliant buildings but also on a lot of other ways.

Maybe it's about time we considered some unconventional options. This may sound absurd in the geopolitical set up of our age but corrective like ours, admittedly 9 point at self-governance, should have options such as outsourcing government functions to countries like Singapore or Hong Kong. Or invite Japan to handle our industries. Or annexation by the United States even. This way, we will have the most efficient and effective governments, state of the art industries, impregnable military defenses and many more.

A truly multinational sovereign state, a perfect fusion of East and West and, perhaps, finally the truly venerable "heart of the Orient." As it is, many of our people are already going abroad to work as foreigners...subjecting themselves to foreign rule or foreign hands.

—PABLITO MANCERAS IV,
philipinemercy@yahoo.com

Bishops should take cue from Moses

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in the Philippines, represented by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, as divided. Some bishops and priests are very vocal in telling President Macapagal Arroyo to resign because she has lost the public trust and confidence and the moral ascendancy to govern. Some nuns and priests no very consequent, providing security for Ann Lozada whenever he goes. People from all walks of life do not only want to lose him, they also want to see him personally.

But some priests are prohibited by their superiors to say Masses for Fr. Smith's release, saying that they have been told that politics should never be injected into Church matters. Why is it politics if Lozada speaks of scandals, corruption and obstruction was committed by those in power? Lozada never said that he is a politician or that he has political ambitions.

Although Church leaders are divided, they are all for consensual action for truth. But how far have they gone in their endeavor to find the truth? Some are lukewarm because they say there is the so-called separation of Church and the State.

In the Old Testament, we read about Moses leading his people to the promised land in order to escape the hardships and suffering inflicted upon them by an obsessive government. He was what Jaime Cardinal Sin did for his flock many years back. Now, the people are looking for another Cardinal Sin.

In the New Testament, we also read about the good shepherd who leads his flock to green pastures and cold, clean, fresh water. He guards them against their enemies at all times.

Now that Ann Orea is no longer here on earth, the leaders of the Church have taken His place. We are now suffering in insult—a situation made worse and more painful by unabashed, absolute corruption. Will the Church leaders just are nothing, bear nothing, see nothing and do nothing for their flock? If they are unsure in their call for consensual action for truth, all they have to do is to start leading their flock—in schools, colleges and universities all over the country. With the Catholics comprising about 80 percent of the populace, this move could mean millions of people rising in protest.

The Church should now exert all pressure on President Arroyo so that she would allow all those whose names have been dragged into the web of government scandals to attend the Senate hearings and subpoena issued that will be asked in the search for truth. If the President does not do this, the Church leaders should know what to do next.

—ANTONIO C. ESTRADA,
56 Casas Blvd.,
Agno, La Union 2504

Filipinos urged to stand up for rights and rice

THE FRONT-PAGE PHOTO OF Muslim children, flanked by soldiers as they were waiting for food rations (Inquirer, 4/7/08), captured the sense of how the interim administration, lacking the political will to address the fundamental demands of the people, including genuine land reform, is perpetrating Filipino children and veterans.

It seems the Arroyo administration believes that keeping the people hungry and justifying them to flee through the Armed Forces of the Philippines, as with empty promises or fantastic accounts of economic growth are an effective way of clinging to power.

Should the people forever queue up for United Nations food? Should the people forever try their luck in 1.13-million-lots sales? Should children forever hope to eat in kiddie gig shows to earn money for their parents and the family?

The photo caption stated that three decades of fighting has displaced hundreds of thousands of villagers, disrupted farming and caused food shortages in Central Mindanao. But the crux of the issue is really a land problem in an agricultural country where there is no clear program on land distribution, subsidy, education and protection against landlord oligarchy. The land problems and militarization is counter people's economic aspirations but are not only true in Mindanao but also in other regions of the country. How people struggle to educate and arm themselves is not unlike what the Muslims of Mindanao are doing. It is a true enemy. If Filipinos in other parts of the country.

It is not surprising. The voices remain mute or sick. We need to heed ourselves and save our sanity and culture. After all, if the poor majority of Filipinos, as well as the middle class families, do not speak and rise, they cannot have their rice and rights.

—RAMON GUEVARA,
secretary general,
Bataog sa Magkabuhol sa Bayan,
sbmgbayan@yahoo.com

Transfer of offices mandated by EO 682

THE HAS REFERENCE TO THE LETTER "Stop transfer of government offices" (Inquirer, 3/24/08) of Sonny Lolarnia. He alleged that some workers expressed strong opposition to the plan to transfer, starting this year, the offices of at least four government departments, to key provincial cities.

The regional director of the Department of Public Works and Highways Region 4-B, Arnaldo O. Reyes, said he is one of the affected officers. He stressed that Executive Order 682, which was signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Nov. 22, 2007, mandates the transfer of the DPWH Region 4-B regional office to Calapan City.

Under EO 682, the President has designated Calapan City in Mindoro Oriental as the regional center of Region 4-B. All the regional offices in Region 4-B have been directed to establish their respective satellite offices in the regional center within six months from the effectivity of the order and effect their full transfer within 18 months thereafter.

—ELIZABETH P. PEGRON,
officer in charge-chief,
Public Information Division,
Department of Public Works and Highways

Exercise freedom in Christian way

IN THE WAKE OF THE ALLEGEDLY QUESTionable/anomalous contracts entered into by the government, protest actions asking for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation, scandalous hearings, talking plots, even prior sex and related maneuvers from personalities, groups and politicians have hogged the limelight.

We at Museo de Colonia, which was founded in 1969 and today has 2,000 members, yet enjoy what we have long stood for—an advocacy of democracy, justice and providence for everyone to need, for the glory of God.

We remain focused on this mission. But, deeply disturbed by the bitter division in our society, we find it is our duty to speak up on the matter.

Freedom of expression is a right of every Filipino. It must not be suppressed but neither must it be used irresponsibly. It should be used in a Christian way...a peaceful way. We believe that as brothers and sisters, Filipinos should love one another. Jesus himself taught that we should love our enemies.

"Whoever loves me will heed the first none." Everybody else, even the president of a country. We are but human beings, and we commit mistakes in our weakest moments. GMA should be given the benefit of the doubt, if not forgiveness. She should be given a chance to reform government.

We therefore call for a peaceful exercise of the freedom of expression, through love and forgiveness, in our quest for reforms.

—REV. JOSUNG T. REYES,
founder-chairman,
Misión de Colonia Inc.,
8 Galeria, La Loma, Quezon City

UP regents should quit

THE CURRENT CHAIR OF THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Board of Regents is a man whose name, a proper noun just like any other proper noun, must soon tend up just like "quisling" and "hoodlet"—a contemptible noun. And in meaning would be "a moral pervasive he who desperately wraps his opinches self around any semblance of public post, in an effort to stand up/on on the public interest."

Membership in the UP Board of Regents is a position of public honor. Its members have the public duty to stand up and tell their captain chair, "We will resign if you will not!" And reclaim their honor by honoring their word.

—PABLITO S. SAN JOSE,
BA 1967, MA 1991,
UP School of Economics

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Ex-AFP comptroller acquitted again

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with five police escorts and lawyers Constantino de Jesus and Manuel Cupa.

Engaging reporters in a chat before the proceedings, Garcia expressed confidence that he and his lawyers had mounted a good defense.

But the accused took a swipe at the media, saying: "[Whether] I will be convicted or acquitted, the media already have a ruled house, which is unjustice."

4 in all

A total of four perjury cases were filed in 2004 by the Office of the Ombudsman against Garcia.

Still pending in the First and Fourth Divisions are those involving Garcia's SALN for 1997 and 2008, respectively.

The criminal cases filed against Garcia stemmed from a letter of the US Embassy's Department of Homeland Security in September 2004 addressed to the Office of the Ombudsman.

The letter said US Customs and Border Patrol officials had discovered and seized $140,000 from Garcia's sons, Ian Carl and Juan Paolo, at the San Francisco International Airport.

According to records, Garcia's wife, Clarita, was also found to have transported into the United States from the Philippines over $500,000 on various trips made since 1995.

She was also discovered to own various properties in the United States.

The case for which Garcia was cleared by the Second Division—which is also hearing his plunder case—involved three cars that government lawyers had accused him of not declaring in his 1998 SALN.

The government lawyers had contended that Garcia withheld from the SALN from his ownership of three vehicles—a Toyota Previa, a Mitsubishi L-300 and a 1997 Honda Civic, all costing a total of P1.51 million.

They said that the declaration would have backed the "well founded belief" that Garcia had accumulated wealth disproportionate to his legitimate income. (On the three, Garcia only reported that he owned a vehicle worth P670,000.)

The Second Division's findings were similar to those presented by the Third Division when it cleared Garcia of misbehaving his net worth nine years ago.

The 14-page decision written by the Second Division's Associate Justice Samuel Martires said that "valuation error" Garcia had committed was attributable to the purported mistake in the preparation of the SALN form by the Civil Service Commission.

'Capacitated into I'

It is questioned the CSC for omitting up with only one type of document when the State—the public Act No. 3019 and RA 6713...required him.

Under RA 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, a public official is required to accomplish a statement of assets and liabilities.

RA 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials, requires one to declare his/her net worth, financial and business interests, aside from the statement of assets and liabilities.

"Surprisingly, the two required documents were originally filed into one," the Second Division said.

It also said a closer look at the SALN form used by the AFP showed that there was an space for Garcia, or any other public official, to declare the assets and liabilities and net worth of his wife and children under the age of 18.

There was no instruction in the form that required Garcia to declare the assets and liabilities of his wife and unmarried children, the court said.

'Honest mistake'

It noted that the same observations was raised by Justice Norberto Geraldez, when he wrote the Third Division's decision in favor of Garcia.

"A close statement of a belief is not perjury ... A false statement which is obviously the result of an honest mistake is not perjury," the Second Division said.

"We find the confluence of events in here created the failure of the prosecution to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt," it said.

The court also said that even the prosecution had shown that only one vehicle—the Toyota Previa—was registered under Garcia's name, and that the two others were registered in the name of his wife.

"It was inconsistent upon the prosecution to prove that these two other cars are conjugal property, which the accused might to have declared, but none was proven so[to]," the court said.

Citing the Family Code of the Philippines, the Second Division also said that not all the property of the spouses belonged to the husband, as property in the conjugal partnership.

It likewise ruled that the information filed by the Office of the Ombudsman against Garcia was premature, depriving the latter of his right to review and correction.

Hanjin: We have nothing to hide ...

Front page A1

THIS IS A photo of the Subic forest area before the controversial Hanjin Shipyard condominium was constructed. At right is a Google Earth satellite photo of the site in the Subic Bay forest where the Hanjin condos now stand.

Front page A1

bared to us or disregarded."

"We have a target date to meet and transportation is set by the end of May," Kim Dong Kwon, architectural chief engineer of the building, said when this reporter visited the site on Monday.

A sign at the site said the buildings were targeted for completion within the next "732 days."

The residential buildings—one rising 22 stories and the other 12 stories—are being constructed within the 18,000-hectare forest watershed preserved area inside the free port.

This reporter was given an exclusive tour of the site up to the fifth floor of the taller building. Most of the units, with a floor area of 114 square meters each, are in the finishing stages.

Zoning issue

On the walls are study floor area sign reading: "HAWAII AND TAIWAN SA CONDITECH. DOH SHU (The bay are learned from the construction site)."

Kim said that Hanjin "has nothing to hide and followed every step in securing the necessary clearances for the housing project intended for Koreanemployees."

He stressed that Hanjin did not do any major cutting of trees, saying: "What we did was mostly grass cutting."

But a source within the ecozone group who spoke on condition of anonymity told this reporter that the "real issue is not the cutting of the trees" but the "zoning policy" which, according to the source, was ignored.

"If there will be a threats in reorganizing, it is the zoning issue that will be difficult to explain because the classification of the area where the buildings were being constructed was not changed," the source said.

The source asked for anonymity, having no authority to speak to reporters and fearing administrative sanctions.

Pink zone

Atsushi Abe Ueno-Rovel, head of the SBMA ecology center, said the area where the 22-story condominium building was being built remained a "pink zone."

This means that while it is already a built-up area—that is, cleared and removed—it is classified as a recreation zone, according to Rovel.

Hence, any development at a project in the area must be in keeping with the protection and preservation of nature, such as jungle adventure and related activities.

"In fact, we raised an initial opinion expressing reservations [about] the building of the Hanjin condos, knowing that the area was identified as a recreational and development zone," Rovel said.

Former SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo expressed the same opinion, saying he would have opposed the building of condominiums in the area but would have recommended proposals to develop the area into an ad-venture park.

Attraction of the forest

"The forest is part of the attraction and any development to that area should be in consonance with nature," Payumo said.

This has given rise to questions among some environmentalists on those concerned with protecting nature. If it's a "pink zone," is terrestrial development okay, what happened? Plus there a change in zoning in the free port area?

Rovel said that as far as the ecology center was concerned, "it's a pink zone," but she explained that approval of the project did not entirely rest with her department.

She said that aside from the ecology center, the Hanjin application also passed scrutiny by other offices, including the SBMA planning and development office.

A tradeoff

Boyd John "Chris" Rabigting, head of the planning and development office, admitted that one of the issues raised in the Hanjin housing project was zoning.

"Before any office issued a clearance, we made sure the project area in conformity with the zoning," Rabigting said.

He said the three-hectare area in the Cubi-Tiftuc District, where the buildings are being constructed, was already a "built-up area" during the time of the US naval base.

But a later study funded by the World Bank identified the area as part of a commercial zone. The zoning study was conducted in 2000-2002, according to Rabigting.

Former SBMA tourism head Ursula Santos lamented that what happened was "a case of tradeoff—economic development taking precedence over environmental concerns."

"The alarming part here is that it may just be one of many taking place inside SBMA now," Santos said. "Maybe we should start questioning what other projects were issued environmental clearances in the name of private development."

Based on field interviews conducted by this reporter, it appeared that the administration of Hanjin to build a housing condominium project for its employees passed through several departments before it was eventually approved by the SBMA Board via Resolution No. 07-10-1400 under a lease agreement for 50 years.

Based on documents from the ecology center of the SBMA, Hanjin cut around of 63 trees under three cutting permits issued by the center.

SBMA defends ECC power

By Norman Bordadora

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN Authority Administrator Armand Arreza yesterday said the SBMA was empowered by law to issue environmental clearance certificates (ECCs) to investors inside the special economic zone.

Arreza said that aside from a memorandum of agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the SBMA, the SBMA was also mandated by Republic Act No. 7227 to issue such clearances.

"The idea of the law is to make the special economic zone a one-stop shop for [business] licenses," Arreza said at a news forum.

He said the law would have to be amended if the SBMA were to stop issuing environmental clearances to investors.

Sen. Richard Gordon said there was "really an violation" by the SBMA.

"I have checked it. There were no trees cut, the area had been cleared in the 1960s by the Americans," Gordon said in a press conference.

Gordon said he considered Arreza a protege and "I don't think he is going to be involved in any shenanigans of this nature."

Arreza said he recognized that the DENR could revoke the ECCs which the SBMA's ecology center had issued to business establishments.

"They can overturn them but that is unlikely because we also conduct environmental impact assessments. There is a technical group that conducts studies to make sure the establishments are up to our environmental standards," Arreza said. RGM a request from Ch? Carlos urgent

More floods seen due to climate change

Front page A1

estate cave most areas during the 21st century, with consequences for the risk of rain-generated floods," said the report, which was released at the IPCC's annual meeting in Budapest.

"At the same time, the proportion of land surface in extreme drought at any one time is projected to increase," it said.

Rising food costs

The report comes at a time when the prices of food staples such as rice and wheat are increasing sharply because of rising demand from Asia and poor harvests due to bad weather.

In the Philippines, for example, rice is the staple food of 93 percent of the population and imports have doubled in the past decade, according to a report from the Government Watch Center below.

That is estimated to cost the Philippine government $1.3 billion in 2008, as to subsidizes the difference between the world market price and the price at which rice is sold domestically, Credit Suisse said.

The situation is expected in many developing countries and will likely be worsened by climate change. Eva de Boer, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, told journalists in Budapest.

He said that by 2020, unless action was taken to mitigate the effects of climate change, 250 million people in Africa could be suffering from water stress," which means lack of access to adequate water for drinking and agriculture.

It is a problem that will spread beyond the continents and create a major challenge for governments globally, he then said.

Canada's 'boreal'

"The risk is that these people can no longer sustain themselves and they have to find somewhere else to go," he said.

In a report released on Thursday, the environmental group Greenpeace warned that Canada threatened to ignite a "carbon bomb" that could drastically worsen global warming if it continued heavy logging in some of its vast northern forest.

Targeting and other development in the boreal have released the carbon that the trees have trapped from the atmosphere over decades, potentially producing more greenhouse gases than from burning fossil fuels, Greenpeace said.

It called for a moratorium on new logging in areas of the forest that still had large, undisturbed blocks of older-growth trees, and raised similar fears about the boreal forests stretching across Russia and northern Europe.

'Research is starting to show'

"Research is starting to show that the forest is ripping from being an annual carbon sink to being an annual carbon source," said Christy Ferguson, Greenpeace's forests campaigner in Toronto.

'Turning up the heat'

Greenpeace's "Turning Up the Heat" report, prepared by researchers at the University of Toronto, surveyed a variety of separate scientific studies on the boreal forest in recent years.

Canada's boreal forest, characterized by the predominance of conifers like pine and spruce, stretches in a vast curve across the country below the Arctic, from the Yukon territory in the northwest to the Atlantic coast of Newfoundland.

A 1999 study estimated the forest stored about 186 billion metric tons of carbon, equal to about 27 times what the world produces from burning fossil fuel each year. Two-thirds of the carbon is stored in the forest's soil, which decays when the tree cover is removed.

According to Greenpeace, the carbon released as trees are harvested contributes to climate change.

This, in turn, threatens the northern forest with problems such as insect outbreaks and increased forest fires that destroy more trees.

'We can stop it'

The global warming, which is often most apparent in the far north, also allows the permafrost to melt, releasing still more greenhouse gases.

This worsens the scenario of a "carbon bomb" as the sudden release of massive amounts of carbon into the atmosphere, similar to what happened in 1947 when peat fires broke out in Indonesia, Ferguson said.

"It hasn't happened yet. That's good, and we can stop it," she said.

Greenpeace is not calling for a total ban on logging in the boreal forest, where many small communities are dependent on the lumber, plywood and paper industries for economic survival.

In fact, protecting parts of the forest will help producers in the long run, it said.

Canada's forest industry has argued that because harvested trees are replanted, carbon released through logging is eventually recaptured as the trees regrow.

Carbon-neutral

The Canadian Forest Products Association said last December that its members had agreed to make the industry carbon-neutral by 2020 by offsetting having to purchase carbon offset credits.

But Ferguson said the scientific studies indicated that carbon-neutral logging might not be possible, and that the soil in some logged areas continued to release carbon for up to a decade after the trees were cut.

"So much as we would want it to be the way it works, that just isn't what happens," Ferguson said. Reuters

Bread prices going up, too, on April 15

By [illegible]

[illegible] economists.

Also set to raise the prices of bakery products next month are the Philippine-Chinese Bakery Association Inc. and the Laguna Bakers Association, a group of bakeries based in Santa Maria. In and other parts of Luzon that mainly produces pan de sal.

Big players follow suit

The Philippine Federation of Bakers Associations alone represents some 18,000 members who run small neighborhood-type operations.

A fourth group, the Philippine Baking Industry Group (Philbaking), which is composed of big players, said its members were expected to follow suit by the end of the month or early in May.

Asked how the price increases would affect the weights of pan de sal, Chavez declined to give details, saying that each bakery has its own standards depending on the mix of ingredients.

"These details depend on the very tight competition that we see even among [the Federation's members]," Chavez said.

Help bakers

Chavez appealed to the government to take steps to help the bakery sector similar to how it was addressing the rice situation.

"We ask that the government review supplies by importation for direct distribution to bakers," he said.

But Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said in a television interview that Mr. request to the Chinese government for an allocation of 150,000 metric tons of wheat for the Philippines this year had been turned down.

More price increases coming

Philbaking president Simplicio Tanah Jr. said Favila should make another request, this time for flour.

"We have to keep trying," Tanah said. "Our monitoring of the international market for wheat, the raw material for flour, shows that the price per bushel increased to $24.15 for May deliveries, which means further price increases."

He said the price for June wheat deliveries was pegged at about $15 per bushel, higher than the $10.06-to-$11 per bushel.

"We can only hope that the flour millers could accept price increases just as the bakeries are doing," Tanah said.

Bread consumption declines

Because of rising prices, domestic bread consumption in March declined by 10 percent compared with the same month in 2007, according to the Philbaking president.

But [illegible] global food costs are not a temporary phenomenon and prices are likely to stay above 2004 levels until 2015 because of [illegible] the World Bank said on Wednesday.

In a policy paper prepared for weekend meetings of world finance chiefs in Washington, the World Bank said food prices were set to stay high in 2008 and 2009, and then decline as supply and demand respond to high prices. REUTERS report from Reuters

GMA: Abra, Apayao poor to get P500 in food aid

By [illegible]

Inc.

To eliminate the long queues at SSS outlets, the agency has raised to five billion the maximum amount of its subsidized checks that a person can buy in one day.

SSS spokesperson Rea Balcoba said the agency wanted to eliminate the long queues at SSS outlets by allowing consumers to buy five billion.

The SSS previously allowed a maximum purchase of three billion. In some areas, the maximum was one billion.

"If people will buy five billion one day they probably they will no longer buy over the next day," Bangayan said in a telephone interview.

No need for IDs, ink

Bangayan said the SSS would also do away with asking for identification cards and placing indelible ink on the fingers of those who buy affordable rice from its outlets.

"There is a need for such measures only when there is a rationing. We're not rationing rice," Bangayan said.

He said the ID system and the use of indelible ink were introduced at SSS provincial outlets to flush out enterprising individuals who buy SSS rice only to sell it to retail stores.

"We will place people in the outlets who will try to remember the faces of the customers," Bangayan said.

He said the P44 billion in the Bicol region would start the distribution of SSS rice in homes, gap center.

10th poorest province

In Sorsogon, the President said 37,000 poor families in Abra and 3,000 families in Apayao, who were identified by Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral, would receive P500 each and an additional P500 at Sorsogon for each child.

"Our main term objective is to focus on putting food in the table of our people, [the global prices of rice and of basic commodities like food are putting a strain on all] hardworking Filipinos," she said.

"This situation has hurt particularly our very poor, like Abra, which is the 10th poorest province in the Philippines, with 53.1 percent of the population under the poverty line," Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Arroyo said the government's action plan was to secure the rice supply, ensure its proper distribution and reduce the [illegible] against people who hoard it.

Temptation too big

She said directly distributing NFA rice to the poor was essential because the price difference between subsidized rice and commercial rice had become too big.

"The temptation is (there) has become too big as well, and that's why we are seeking the help of the 16th (local government unit) and the Church-based communities to help with (the) identification—where to get the cheaper rice," Ms Arroyo said.

She said certain NFA officials were conniving with traders and were diverting NFA rice, which is supposed to be for the poor.

Same quality

The President said SSS rice and commercial rice were almost the same in quality "It has to be in the sachets that's different," Ms Arroyo said.

She said selling rice to needy families was more practical.

PEOPLE crowded near the roadtop as he motorcade from there drove by on Thursday to the middle of Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City to buy cheap rice sold by the National Food Authority. [illegible]

The President was in Abra to launch the "Abra Sustainable Agriculture Development program (Asad)," a [illegible] government project designed to transform [illegible] and marginal areas into self-sufficient upland farming communities.

Agriculture primary concern

She has released at least P150 million for the Asad. The project is expected to cover thousands of hectares of upland farmlands, and thereby help generate jobs in the area.

Agriculture will become the administration's primary concern in the next few years, according to the President.

She said her strategies involved a major shift to farm productivity techniques by advocating organic fertilizers, like chicken dung instead of processed urea, because Sorsogon farms have proven that organic fertilizers made it efficiently as the best environmental product.

Ms Arroyo said Abra was promoting a sustainable agricultural development project, which is an integrated commercial farm approach for the uplands.

Ben Perez on the three elected low-income sectors in the public to encourage local solutions in farming and food supply, she said.

Government has also upgraded its approach to farm infrastructure and technology.

Mr Arroyo announced that Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. had set aside at least P300 million to finish the Masadu bridge, thereby [illegible] from her audience.

The bridge has not been completed because the local government planned for construction in 1994 despite the lack of funds.

Pura Santiago, chair of the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government, said the announcement surprised her, although she said the P300-million completion budget that the President had quoted might be too high.

Noodles in schools

Imelda Rep. Rodolfo Albano, meanwhile, proposed that governments start distributing rice products such as noodles and flakes in the school feeding program.

"If you make rice less accessible, it will produce more food when cooked," Albano said at a news forum in Quezon City.

Albano said the government should start serving noodles to reduce the cooking time. With reports from Reuters, Michael Lim Ubac and Gemelle Sarfati

Spicy Korean kimchi now space delicacy

By [illegible]

Bringing the aromatic cuisine to the final frontier, the 29-year-old Hanaro-born crew plans to hold a spicy lunch-to-go party for her space station colleagues. Yi and two Russian cosmonauts, all first-timers in space, blasted off from Baikonur in the arid Kazakh steppes on Tuesday.

Their mission is also considered of giving hungry after being forced to such food gains use of small aluminum tubes.

But advances in technology, and the growing number of countries sending their citizens into space, have rendered the space cuisine with more flavory.

Today "we can choose the food that we want," Sergei Volkov, Yi's captain, told reporters in a press conference here on the eve of the launch.

"The specialists try and make it so close to real food as possible," Volkov added.

Chinese tea, Malaysian satay

And with Asia's economic giants [illegible] to catch up with the more established space programs of France and the United States, the new menu is to space [illegible] Asians.

Malaysia's first astronaut, Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor, [illegible] aboard the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 2007 by offering the ISS crew an array of Malaysian specialties, including mangosteen and Malaysian-style satay.

"We really liked the Malaysian food. My favorite was dried mango," US astronaut Peggy Whitson said during a link-up with colleagues aboard.

Whitson later shared of the South Korean that Malaysian food was milder than usual. "We're inside now it's not very spicy as the Russians can eat is very well."

When the first Chinese astronaut, Yang Liwei, flew into space in 2003, he brought with him Chinese herbal tea, sliced, dried pork with garlic and marinated fried free chicken to make him feel at home.

A blander era

A subtract at a space museum near the Russian-managed Baikonur launch pad, displays space food from another, blander era.

Aluminum tubes, tin cans and clear plastic bags with powders inside are stacked with peeling labels reading "Cabbage soup" and "Russian mustard."

Tatyana Gavrushenko, space food specialist at the Moskovsky research institute, [illegible] showcase the consumptive actually delicious, and that only the Russians had food tailor-made depending on the astronaut's tastes.

"I think the Russian food is better but each to his own—it also depends on habits and traditions," Gavrushenko said.

"The Americans like our soups, our borscht, biscuits and the pizza with onions. Every-one's favorite dish is white cheese with roots," she added.

Gavrushenko's institute produces around 200 food items, including traditional Russian black bread, a Central Asian rice-dish called pilaf and cheese with sex.

As he watched a Soyuz rocket being lifted into position for Yi's launch on Tuesday, former Russian cosmonaut Orvel Vinogradov admitted to being a little jealous of the new-fangled space food.

KIMCHI'S READY: South Korea's first astronaut Yi So-yeon, a crew member of the 17th mission to the International Space Station (ISS), gestures before the launch of the Soyuz-FG rocket at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

"The food now is completely different," said Vinogradov, who has spent a total of 568 days in space, mostly in the 1990s. "We didn't complain then but we always wanted a bit more."

Mother tainted, zipper broke

As the Russian spacecraft's iconic film Delight blast-off [illegible] spectators held their breaths, South Korean celebrated their first astronaut and the astronaut's mother fainted.

But the flight is still [illegible] launched from the same pad that sent Yuri Gagarin and Sputnik into space—answered Rivalries. The spacecraft lifted off within seconds of its scheduled departure and delivered its crew into orbit about 18 minutes later.

"Everything goes like Swiss machine," so Soyuz flights, said Cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko, who witnessed a number of launches at the Baikonur Cosmodrome as head of the European Space Agency's Moscow office.

A zipper broke Sunday on Volkov's space suit, but the suit passed a pressure test and the 33-year-old cosmonaut was cleared for flight.

The spacecraft is scheduled to deliver Yi, Volkov and counterpart Oleg Kotsarenko, 53, to the ISS.

Despite the morning routine, the sight of the 38-meter-high rocket arcing through the cloudless sky will unveil deep emotions. Relatives, friends and colleagues stood in silence watching the huge vehicle rise as though weightless from the launch pad.

Yi's mother, Jung Kum-suk, screamed and collapsed as Russian medics in orange jump suits rushed to her aid. Officials said later that she had recovered.

A $18-million ride

The launch triggered celebrations in South Korea, where thousands of people gathered near City Hall to [illegible] to watch on giant television screens. Live broadcasts showed Yi inside the capsule smiling and waving and giving the thumbs-up sign.

"The birth of the first South Korean astronaut is a joy to the people and will give a big hope to the growing generations," President Lee Myung-bak told the crowd.

South Korea paid Russia $20 million for the launch, and staged a 2006 competition that drew 36,000 applicants to become the country's first astronaut. Reports from AFP and AP

Higher NFA rice price opposed by lawmakers

Front page A1

lan," Pimentel said in a text message to the Inquirer. High food prices have triggered violent protests in a number of poor countries.

Militant groups are also opposed to the NFA plan.

Amid the criticism, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, the acting executive secretary, said the proposal to increase the price of NFA rice was still "under study."

Bunye said "a lot of consultations will have to be made before any increase is actually implemented."

NFA Administrator Jesup Navarro on Wednesday said that the agency was considering raising the price of its subsidized rice to reduce its losses and to help boost the income of rice farmers.

Currently, the NFA buys palay (unhusked rice) from farmers at P17 a kilo, an amount deemed too low by the producers, and sells it at P18 a kilo. Commercial rice traders buy palay from farmers at P19 a kilo and sell it at a much higher price, often at more than P35 a kilo.

NO NUMBER, NO RICE. Rice buyers store their numbers as they line up to buy NFA rice in Barangay Bansa, Quezon City, on Wednesday. (INQUIRER)

People first

Negrillo said the rice being distributed by the NFA was not meant to generate funds for the government but to provide affordable rice to the poor. "Our people first before profits," he said.

Sen. Francis Escudero, for his part, said the government should not worry about the mounting losses of the NFA from its subsidies because "it was not created to make money but to serve the people."

Escudero said the move to reduce the government's most direct subsidy to the poor was ill-timed considering the threat of spiraling inflation triggered by the shortage of basic commodities worldwide.

Focus on distribution

Escudero said that the government should instead focus on distribution and not on the pricing of NFA rice. "The NFA's main concern is to ensure that its subsidized rice goes only to the tables of poor Filipinos and not to the giant warehouses of smuggling-loan traders taking advantage of the situation," he said.

"The NFA is not mandated to talk in consultation on how much it should raise the price of subsidized rice, promised to balance the interest of farmers on one hand and that of consumers on the other.

Navarro said the NFA should already increase its selling price to members body farmers to improve their income and to avoid blaming the NFA's losses.

But Navarro also said the NFA should take into account the ability of the public to buy rice.

"We will have to consult all parties and government agencies concerned. We cannot just decide how much should be the increase without taking into account the opinion of everyone concerned," Navarro said in a phone interview.

Impact on poor

The NFA chief said representatives of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), the Department of Labor and Employment, labor groups, and farmers' organizations, among others, would be invited to the consultation.

The NAPC is supposed to provide inputs on how an increase in the price of NFA rice would affect the number of poor Filipinos.

The government earlier reported that the poverty incidence in the Philippines rose to 33 percent in 2006 from 30 percent in 2000. This was largely a result of increasing prices, which made many Filipino households unable to meet the minimum amount of spending for food and other basic needs to go beyond the poverty line.

Rule of thumb

Navarro said the NFA was increasing huge losses because of the nature of its role, which is to ensure steady supply and consistent income to the price of rice.

As a rule of thumb, Navarro explained, the selling price of NFA rice should be twice the amount of the buying price of palay to cover costs of operation, marketing and transportation, with basic incoming losses.

If that were followed, the NFA should be selling rice at P34 a kilo. But of course, the NFA said, selling rice at that price would not be affective at its mandate. Still, a smaller price increase was required if the agency were to arrest its losses.

The NFA reported a net loss of P1.27 billion in 2007. The losses marked a substantial drop from P10.8 billion loss in 2006 as a result of measures to trim operational costs, according to the NFA.

Increasing the selling price of rice, however, was still necessary to substantially address the NFA's financial woes.

Import policy

Nathaniel Santiago, Bayan Muna secretary general, said the NFA incurred more than P62 billion in losses since 2003 mainly due to President Macapagal-Arroyo's trade liberalization and importation policy.

"Since 2003, the landed cost of imported rice amounts to P23-P24 a kilo and [the NFA] sells it at P18.25 a kilo. That's an automatic P4.75-P5.75 shortfall per kilo," Santiago said.

"This will be worsened by the latest government importation of 500,000 metric tons, arriving in June, with an estimated landed cost of P31 a kilo," he stressed.

Santiago said NFA rice procurement from 2001 to 2006 was barely 0.03 percent of total palay production. "How can the Arroyo administration say that it helps in increasing farmers' incomes?" he said.

The party-list group reiterated calls for the government to stop rice importation, abandon its rice trade liberalization policy, stop land use conversion, increase the NFA procurement capacity to 25 percent, and dismantle rice cartels.

Stop aiding farmers

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said the NFA should stop aiding farmers as its excuse to jack up prices because it was not true that farmers were getting higher profits from this crisis.

Lutchesh actually control rice production in the country, KMP chair Rafael Mariano said in a statement.

Seven out of every 10 farmers do not own the land they till, Mariano said.

"It's the landlords who get the lion's share of the farmer's harvest. In the division of harvest there are various schemes that shares from the landlords. Whether it be 75-25, 60-40 or 50-50 it is the farmer who shoulders the work and the expenses," the peasant leader said.

Contingency plans

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said it had come up with contingency plans in case the rice crisis degenerates into widespread violence.

PNP Director General Avelino Razon yesterday told reporters that the PNP would post policemen to guard queues of people buying rice to avoid any violence. With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Cornelio Lo Dalino, Alexis Pajes and Jerome Aning

Prawn farms destroying RP fish nurseries

Front page A1

"The low-lying zoning of mangroves, but by (the Philippine Center) instead by building dikes that cut off the seawater, until the trees eventually died," said Jessie delos Reyes, a local marine ecology advocate.

"Now the community is suffering because their ground water has turned salty and their access to fishing areas has been cut," De los Reyes added. The case is pending.

Despite steep government loans and generous land leases in the 1970s, prawn culture failed to reach its full potential in the Philippines, where the ponds turned out to be better suited for growing milkfish, said Primavera of the Philippines-based Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center.

Wealth for pioneers

But the industry took off elsewhere, creating new wealth for many of the pioneers who fed the world's acquired taste for prawn tenderloins.

"Mangroves were cleared for prawn farming in countries that did not have a long tradition in aquaculture, such as Thailand, Vietnam and Ecuador," Primavera said.

Thriving as it were the mounths of tidal rivers and estuaries, the trees feature grotesque-shaped prop roots that serve as large allowing them to thrive in saline and water-logged soils.

Mangroves serve as nurseries rich marine microbes for juvenile fish, shrimp and other wildlife and as habitats or wintering areas for coastal and migratory birds, and they protect shores against storms and large waves.

Over the past 30 years aquaculture, or commercial fish farming, has wiped out a third of the world's mangrove forests. In some areas such as the Philippines the loss has been up to 80 percent, said Norman Duke, a University of Queensland marine biologist who is one of the world's foremost experts on mangrove forest ecosystems.

"The experts have determined that there are a number of (mangrove) species globally that are threatened with extinction," Carpenter said.

According to Primavera, a healthy coastal ecosystem needs four hectares of mangroves for every hectare of fishpond.

She estimated the Philippine mangrove cover at about 115,000 ha, compared to 200,000 ha of fishponds.

Despite Philippine laws that more 1975 have banned mangrove clearing, Primavera said enforcement had been virtually nil. AFP

NURSERY. Mangroves from different countries inspect newly converted mangroves into a prawn pond in Calatagan, Batangas. Over the past 30 years aquaculture (commercial fish farming) has wiped out a third of the world's mangrove forests.

Statement of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Incorporated

We express our support to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's decision in announcing the increase of farmgate price of palay. This decision will:

1. increase rice production;
2. stimulate the rural economy;
3. create employment opportunities in farm sector in rural areas;
4. discouraged major urban centers like Metro Manila of squatters;
5. improve peace and order situation in the countryside;
6. minimize or eliminate dependence on foreign countries for our food needs;
7. conserve foreign exchange, and
8. effect trickle down of the benefits of a strong GDP.

The world food production situation has changed. While there might be some justification for closing the gap of supply and demand of food by importation, recent events have shown that we cannot really rely on other countries to ensure our own food security. Countries tend to protect their own people when faced with shortages. So, the government has taken the right direction to encourage domestic production by making food crop production profitable for the farmers.

We believe that the government should earmark more investments in other areas in support of crop production such as irrigation, farm to market roads, construction of storage/warehouse facilities and reserve facilities, and the use of hybrid rice seeds to ensure long term sustainability.

We believe that the present supply tightness is a temporary occurrence. Major rice producing provinces in Luzon are either in the peak of harvest or are about to enter into peak harvest. And supply will soon stabilize. There is absolutely no need to panic or hoard.

We held an emergency caucus with rice millers/traders exhorting them to support the government in stabilizing distribution and price for which they have pledged full support and issued a manifesto to that effect.

April 4, 2008

TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Crime rate down in Q1–PNP

CRIME INCIDENCE around the country declined in the first quarter of the year compared to the same period last year, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said yesterday.

PNP spokesman Supt. Nestor Barcelona told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday that the total crime volume in the first three months of the year went down by 6.44 percent compared to that in 2007.

The PNP recorded 31,853 crime incidents during this period against the 17,803 in 2007.

Barcelona attributed the decrease to the current programs of the PNP including an increased police visibility and the "downloading" of PNP personnel from desk jobs to street patrols.

"The office of the PNP is further to reduce crime incidents thru increased police visibility, downloading of more personnel to patrol duty, equipment upgrade and community support are all paying off," Barcelona said.

Alexis Romero

Across the NATION

NEWSBRIEFS

■ KORONADAL CITY

Opposition gov sees diversion in crisis

SOUTH COTABATO Gov. Daisy Avance-Fuentes said the rice crisis could be part of a government ploy to divert the people's attention from the controversial ZTE broadband deal.

"Isn't it very unusual because we in government usually keep problems like this under wraps?" said Avance-Fuentes.

"Why is the crisis being announced, it's the season for pests and price increases. If this was a scenario or a plot. The planners are very good. If not, the President is very lucky."

She said people are now talking about the rice crisis instead of the ZTE scandal.

Ayalan Zanlo, Inquirer Mindanao

■ DAVAO CITY

Fire won't stop ship from delivering cargo

A MV Jenine coil rice cargo ship docked at Sasa port in Davao City Saturday despite a fire that broke out in the engine room of the vessel on March 26.

Investigators said the engine of the ship caught fire while it was docked at Pier 1 in Sasa port.

Fire Senior Inspector Ramon Ramos said the fire was caused by a leaking fuel pipe.

Ramos said the fire was put out by the crew of the vessel before the arrival of the fire trucks.

Jeannette Andrade, Inquirer Mindanao

■ NAGA CITY

18 water refilling stations unlicensed

AT LEAST 18 of the 50 water refilling stations in Naga City have been operating without permits from the Department of Health (DOH).

Bernard Fritz Cruz-Arn, chair of the Naga provincial board's health committee, said he got the information from the regional Department of Health.

All have not undergone water testing, stations were in Canaman, Bombon, Camaligan, Gainza, Magarao, Milaor, Minalabac, Pamplona, San Fernando, Sipocot, Ragay, Lupi, Del Gallego, Libmanan, Pili, Tinambac, Goa, Siruma, Tigaon, Tabuco, Cabusao, Calabanga, Bula, Balatan, Buhi, Iriga City, Nabua, Baao, Bato, Bagamanoc, Caramoan, Garchitorena, Presentacion, Lagonoy, Sangay, Tinambac

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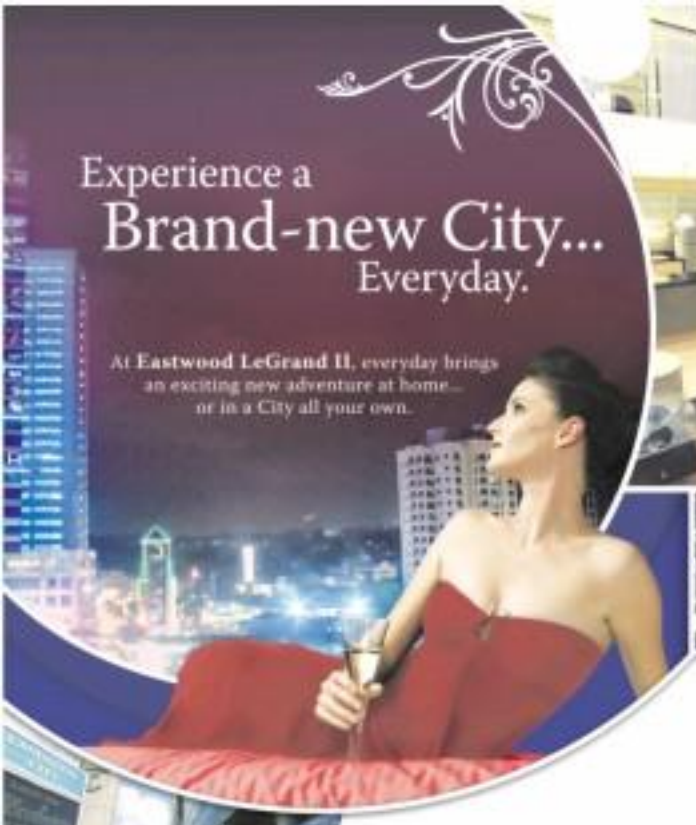

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DID YOU KNOW

ON APRIL 13, 2005, former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot was shot at close range while eating lunch in a Mandaluyong restaurant. He was brought to a hospital but died while undergoing treatment. The gunman, who casually walked out of the restaurant after the shooting, is still at large. — Cyrel Miraflores, Inquirer Research

62 arrested in Quezon City for jueteng

Policemen raid what they thought was safehouse for armed robbers

By Marlon Ramos

POLICE ARRESTED BEFORE MIDNIGHT Wednesday 62 men suspected of being involved in jueteng activities when they accidentally stumbled on the illegal numbers game during a raid in an exclusive subdivision in Quezon City.

Supt. Constante Aggabao, Quezon City Police District Station 10 chief said they filed a case against the suspects for violating Republic Act 1602, or the Anti-Illegal Gambling Act.

He said they conducted the raid on the two-story house at 99 Jericho Street, Fil Heights, Barangay Bagong Silangan at around 10:30 p.m. after getting a tip from members of the homeowners' association who said they had become suspicious of the activities of the men who lived in the house.

He said they initially thought the men were armed robbers.

"We really did not have any idea that it was a jueteng den," he said.

Aggabao was told by residents that at least 300 persons visited the house everyday.

He said suspected jueteng lord George Bacoco, Quezon City, owned the house.

"We have information that Bacoco allegedly sponsors several cockpits in the city," Aggabao said.

A smoking QCPD official, who asked not to be identified, said Tony Sanchez and a certain Tiger Francisco were the other known

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See posters and flyers for details. Promo is from April 19 to June 30, 2008. Per DTI-NCR Permit Nos. 1164 & 1165, Series of 2008.

SMART THE POWER TO LEAD

Dismissed Caloocan City police officer gets a promotion

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A POLICE OFFICER, WHO WAS dismissed from the service 10 months before, was promoted recently to full colonel.

Supt. Reynaldo Lozada, head of the Northern Police District Personnel and Human Resources Division, identified the official as Supt. Eugen Delgado when, until RD, it was deputy commander of the biggest police substation in Caloocan City.

Delgado was charged with administrative rebellion when he was assigned at the Manila Police District.

He had the rank of Chief Inspector when he went AWOL (absent without leave) for 20 days because of a medical condition.

Delgado was deputy commander of Bagong Silang in November.

Records showed that Delgado was dismissed on April 3, 2007. For some reason, he was promoted via superintendent on Dec. 31, 2007.

"We did not know he was dropped from the rolls until we received a copy of his dismissal three months after he was promoted to colonel," Lozada said.

He said they found out about the move from someone in the personnel division of the National Capital Regional Police Office.

"Delgado was inadvertently released of his post after we verified his records," Lozada added.

He said Director Edgardo Aseron, director for Personnel and Records Management in Camp Crame, was informed of the move. Aseron promised to look into the case.

Lozada said he personally checked with the NCRPO and had talked to Delgado who told him he did not know he was charged with absenteeism.

"He don't know what happened because before an official is promoted he has to undergo several screenings and panel interviews," Lozada said.

Inquirer tried to get Delgado's side, but according to the administration officer of the Caloocan City police, the former police official took all his employment files and did not leave any contact number.

Recently, several PNP officials complained of "favoritism" in promotions. Police Director Gen. Avelino I. Razon Jr. denied the allegations and said promotions were based on performance and merit.

Another jealous wife cuts off husband's penis in Pasig City

By Kristine L. Alave

FOR JOELITO BAYSIMBO, THE GOOD news may be over.

Baysimbo, 32, a Pasig City traffic enforcer, was rushed to the hospital before dawn yesterday after his wife Lesly cut off his penis in a violent fight.

PO2 Sally Lipana of the Pasig City police said the incident occurred around 1:30 a.m. yesterday in the bedroom of the couple's house in Nagpayong 1, Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City.

Doctors worked for hours to reattach the cut portion.

Lesly, the police said, had long suspected her husband of infidelity. When the opportunity came early yesterday morning, she cut off her husband's organ with a knife.

Baysimbo was rushed to the Rizal Medical Center by his relatives. A hospital employee said the victim begged the doctors to reattach his penis. Police said Baysimbo would not sue his wife for the sake of the family. The couple have four children.

This is not the first incident of mutilation by an aggrieved wife. Perhaps the most well-known case is that of John Wayne Bobbitt, an American, whose penis was cut off by his wife Lorena in 1993. His organ was reattached after an operation.

Charged with malicious wounding, Lorena told a jury that the physical and emotional abuse she suffered from her husband caused her to snap. The jury found her innocent because of temporary insanity.

Several Filipino women have "done a Bobbitt" over the years. In 1995, Imbeciles Rules of Quezon City cut off the penis of her lover Celestino Ilarde after he said he wanted to return to his wife.

The following year, Sally Guerrero of Davao nearly severed her partner Benicio Bautista's penis after he said he wanted to return to his wife.

Bautista, who had been unfaithful to Guerrero several times, survived the attack.

WAY TO GO
A boy plays water games as he takes a break from swimming in the waters of Manila Bay along Coastal Road in Parañaque City.

Freon tank explodes on bus; 1 passenger hurt

By Marlen Ramos

A WEDDING WAS HURT AFTER AN EXPLOsion ripped through a Bachelor-bound passenger bus on Edsa in Quezon City yesterday morning.

Supt. Augustus Cabrals, Quezon City Police District Station 10 commander, said Marlon Villegas, one of 46 passengers on the bus, had a minor cut on his right foot and was brought to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment. He ruled out terrorism as a motive behind the explosion.

Cabrals said a three-kilogram freon tank under one of the seats of a '02 Isuzu bus suddenly burst as it was approaching Edsa Extension around 9 a.m. on the northbound lane of Edsa.

PO2 Melvin Tabog, case investigator, said the tank was near the engine of the bus. "The force from the bus' engine probably caused the freon tank to explode," he told the Inquirer.

Police briefly held air-condition technicians Noel Garcia and Edwin Baras, employees of Glenphil Enterprises, after they admitted bringing the tank on board the bus.

The two were released after they agreed to pay for the damages. Cabrals, however, said they would still be charges of reckless imprudence against the pair.

62 arrested in QC . . .

Story on page A12

Remembering Glen Rosauro

By Ricardo S. Molay
Contributor

ROSAURO

FOR GLEN ROSAURO, IT HAD BEEN A tough but winning life. At the tender of five months that hijacked a PAL plane to China in 1971 "to seek revolutionary truth," and grappling with a strange political and social universe in a Maoist society, returning to the Philippines only to be imprisoned as a subversive and finally finding his element as a Manila-based courier of Mandarin to China beyond Filipinos, Glen was a person of hard luck in different.

But at 6:15 last Saturday morning (April 5), Rosauro died in a car crash on Tudor Street in Quezon City. The car he had taken was hit by a speeding vehicle that spun out of control. Death was instantaneous for the 57-year-old Quezon City resident who was severely injured in the head and body.

"He was on his way to his Mandarin class to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) when his taxi was hit from behind by a woman driving a car. The cab was a total wreck but its driver miraculously survived," his sister Lorna Mercader said. "Together with the taxi company, we are filing charges against the woman driver."

Rosauro, widower, Brock and Minnesota State University alumni will bury Rosauro in Quezon City to achieve rites befitting one who made history not only because it was the first and only successful hijacking to China but also because it underlined concerns about global terrorism.

When I interviewed the former HSU students of political science in 2004 for an article commemorating their hijack of the DC-9 — 111 "found for Davao, he laughed as he mentioned that he and his comrades were "the original terrorists." He accented his five schoolmates to undertake open sky piracy "so we could liberate our country from poverty and foreign domination through revolution" inspired from China.

Incidentally, I renewed the friendship for the pro-Marxist Leo Manila Chronicle when I was a reporter covering foreign affairs.]

But their request for military training in China was denied, instead they were given courses in Mandarin. Armed with their new language, the six were assigned to work in factories and farms—the better to learn from the workers and peasants who were the backbone in the Chinese revolution.

After seven years, Rosauro, by this time an expert in the Chinese language, and his five comrades who took degrees in medicine and engineering, decided to come home. They returned in batches of two, but Glen and Francisco Chua, were arrested on arrival at the Manila International Airport and detained for two years in Bicutan on charges of "subversion." The others, also using false travel documents, slipped into the country undetected.

With the end of the Marcos regime, Rosauro found himself teaching Mandarin to Filipinos going to a China that had embraced an open-door policy to the world and had begun relaxing socialist strictures.

At the time of his death, Rosauro had a contract with Owwa to teach basic Mandarin to overseas workers bound for China. But his previous students also included notable personalities, such as former ambassador to China Jesus Villa and Tourism Minister Jaime Esperon.

Record-high fuel costs are crippling US airlines

NEW YORK—JOHN BERRY/THE MORNING HERALD

Fuel-driven flight cancellations, airlines and passengers were finding a new source of misery.

Record-high fuel prices and the industry's fragile finances have led to a new round of bankruptcies among smaller carriers in recent weeks, including ATA Airlines, Skybus and Aloha Airgroup.

Bigger airlines are shrinking their fleets to cut fuel costs, even as demand for travel remains strong—meaning flights are growing ever more crowded and unpleasant.

And layoffs are beginning again for a business that, in many of its customers, is already suffering severe problems. It feels that way to airline workers, too, and as the industry's doldrums reverberate, passengers can expect harried and grumpy gate agents and flight attendants.

Moreover, all across the air travel system in the United States, equipment—air traffic control systems, airplanes, airline computer systems—is aging and in many cases outmoded. That means breakdowns and weather problems become more disruptive.

In the near term, airlines cannot raise fares fast enough to cover rising fuel costs—oil settled at a new record price on Wednesday of $110.07 a barrel. That has plunged the industry back into the red after a brief, rare year run of profits. A Merrill Lynch analyst, Michael Linenberg, expects the industry to lose $11.9 billion this year.

One bad sign: A handful of airline shares are cheaper (Frontier, $5.79; Expressjet, $2.23; Hawaiian, $6 cents) than an airport beer.

Many of cost cutting on maintenance—and, to some critics, a lax approach to regulation by the Federal Aviation Administration—appear to be catching up with domestic airlines and their customers.

American Airlines and its domestic competitors have been scaling back maintenance spending for years. Some airlines now work overseas to awards of cheaper labor. Some also cut wages of mechanics in the United States and reduced their number. Others quickened the pace of work at maintenance facilities.

The industry's biggest problem is the price of jet fuel. It follows the price of oil, which has more than doubled since dropping to $32 a barrel in January 2002.

While everyone air fares, a lot of planes simply cannot operate profitably. Though airlines raised fares on a broad scale 16 times in the first quarter of 2008, four of those increases failed to hold. And as many routes, the increases that did hold were ineffective because discount airlines had refused to match the increases. AFP

HISTORIC NEPAL VOTE

Maoists receive queue up to cast their votes on April 10 for an assembly that will rewrite its constitution, the latest effort to transform crossroad, once-medieval territory a modern democracy.

54 Burma migrant workers suffocate in truck

BANGKOK, THAILAND—AFP/Y

Four migrant workers from Burma (also known as Myanmar), most of them women, suffocated in the back of an overcrowded sealed truck in southern Thailand while being smuggled to the resort island of Phuket, police said Thursday.

The victims, along with 17 survivors, had been forced to stand in the truck's sweltering and packed container, police and survivors said. They were about two hours into their trip late Wednesday in Ranong province near Burma when they started collapsing and the driver stopped, police and survivors said.

Twenty-one of the survivors were hospitalized and the rest held for questioning, he said.

"I thought everyone was going to die," Saw Wlu, a 30-year-old survivor, told The Associated Press from police custody. "I thought I was going to die. If the truck had driven for 30 minutes more, I would have died for sure."

Wlu said that about 30 minutes into the trip workers pounded on the container, screamed for air and called the driver, who briefly turned on the air conditioning. The air conditioning later went off, and they called the driver again 30 minutes later but his phone was off. They continued pounding and screaming until he stopped the truck about an hour later, unlocked the container and turned on the air conditioning, Wlu said.

Television reports showed police lifting bodies out of the truck and images of the crowded container empty except for a few pieces of clothing. The dead workers—many wearing little more than T-shirts, shorts and flip-flops—were seen laid out on the floor as a courage to...

"When police got to the scene, they found that 54 of the workers were already dead in the packed container truck," Kunthong said.

Of the dead, 37 were women and 17 were men. Kunthong said 103 people were packed in to the 2.2-meters-by-6-meters (7 feet-by-20 feet) container.

Police did not immediately know what jobs they were heading for, but illegal migrants from Thailand's impoverished neighbor generally come to the country to work in the fishing and construction industries or as maids. AP

Qaida attack planner dead

WASHINGTON—AL-Qaida planner Abu Obaidah al Masri, a main suspect in the 2005 London public transit bombings and a failed 2006 plot to blow up passenger planers, is believed dead from natural causes, US and British officials said on Wednesday.

"There is something meant to believe that Abu Obaidah is dead," a US counterterrorism official said on condition of anonymity McClatchy newspapers reported that Masri died of hepatitis in Pakistan.

The US official said Masri appeared to have died of natural causes, and a British official said his death had been known to security sources for some time.

"He was a major operational figure," another US official said of Masri, the man the source of one of the least known major al-Qaida figures.

Masri was an Egyptian, known as an explosives expert and a key figure in spreading Islamic militancy in Europe by bringing young Muslims with Pakistani backgrounds to Pakistan for training, said M.J. Gohel of the Asia-Pacific Foundation in London. "The terror trail keeps leading back to Pakistan, and Masri was an essential part of al-Qaida's headquarters in that country."

The US official confirmed that Masri was suspected in the plot to blow up airliners over the Atlantic Ocean. The Washington Post said in 2006 he was believed to be al-Qaida's conduit to British-Pakistani cells that carried out the July 7, 2005, subway and bus bombings in London that killed 56 people.

Al-Qaida has something when this man died," the US official said. Reuters

Imagine you're a businessman. Don't bungee ask.

Now an eagle flying high in the sky, soaring over forests and lakes.

Great.

Now imagine you're a client. Responsible for an advertising budget running into the tens of millions. Your decisions affect the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands of colleagues. Whether they will get their Christmas bonuses. Indeed, even if they will have a job this time next year depends on the judgements you make.

Now some idiot from an advertising agency comes along and asks if you would prefer a 'creative' ad or an 'effective' one.

Obviously you'd be crazy not to choose the latter.

The client then says the only way to be sure of an effective ad is to make it creative.

Just as you are about to call security to evict him from your office he makes a likewise presentation.

Real people. he says, don't have to look at your ads.

They can change channel, turn the page or (increasingly) use technology to opt out of receiving them altogether.

You struggle to remember a single ad from the morning's paper. Staggeringly few adverts this day let loose.

OK, you say, now what? I can't force people to see my ads.

No, he says. That's the point. You can't force people to watch and remember your ads. You can only try to make them WANT to see them.

He carries on. Here's why creativity is now more important than ever.

So many brand messages are fighting for attention on so many media channels that it's essential to stand out. And as consumers gain more control over their media, there will soon be no choice for brands but to engage, entertain and reward them for giving up their valuable time.

You're not sure what all that jargon means but you have an uncomfortable feeling it might be true as well.

But he's a bit short on hard evidence and you don't need much time. Alright, where's this all from?" you demand impatiently.

He whips out a campaign for FedEx and a trophy which shows them to have won Silver "Long-term Marketing and Branding Campaign" at the 2007 Asia Marketing Effectiveness Awards.

The judges commented that the campaign was a "thick-skin picture, has "consistently

Advertising Marketing Effectiveness Awards in New York.

Hold on a minute, you say. You were supposed to be showing me effective AND creative ads. These ones are just effective.

Oh, he says, these campaigns have all won lots of creative awards, including Cannes Lions.

Immediately you call security. You didn't get where you are today by going with some flashy creative solution.

Some time later, however you are standing up your office and you find a business card on the floor. Clearly it had been overlooked in the ensuing scuffle. It reads: Paul Rodwick, BSDO Guerrero College. Call 4567 2317.

Now he shows you a Point Marketing Award for Best Promotion in Home Service for Phone You'll Walk Late campaign.

Competing against food campaigns from all over the world, you hear, the work from the Philippines aced off with the prize. Thanks to its dramatic impact on sales.

Finally, he shows you a new budget campaign by Christmas Area Philippines. You hear they do an outstanding job fighting to give

You're about to put it to the test, when you again think what you can remember from all the 5,000 messages and marketing that you see yesterday.

Against your better judgement you put the card in your wallet. You never know. It could prove useful one day.

"Don't give me awards. All I care about is effectiveness."

The WORLD

Edited by Lorenzo B. Bueza

SIX-YEAR-OLD Princess Aiko unfazed by first day of school. AFP

Japan's Princess Aiko starts school with a smile

TOKYO—JAPAN'S 6-YEAR-OLD Princess Aiko smiled nervously for the cameras as she arrived for her first day at Tokyo's exclusive Gakushuin elementary school on Thursday.

Aiko, who would be third in line for the throne if the nation's a girl, was dressed in her school uniform of navy sailor suit with red neckerchief, and was accompanied by her parents, Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako.

She smiled when crowd-control youngsters from her mother, who was dressed in a white suit.

Aiko may be a royal but, like most Japanese elementary school pupils, she will walk to school each day, Kyodo news agency said.

The princess almost made it into the queue for the Japanese throne because of a shortage of male heirs.

But plans to change the law to allow an emperor were shelved after Naruhito's younger brother fathered Prince Hisahito, the first boy born into the imperial family in four decades.

Under current law, if Aiko marries, she loses her royal status. Her aunt was transformed from Princess Sayako into Sayako Kuroda, an ordinary Tokyo housewife, after her marriage to an urban planner. Reuters

US readies rock star welcome for Pope visit

WASHINGTON—WHEN POPE BENEDICT XVI visits the United States next week, the conservative octogenarian will be regaled with a welcome befitting a rock star, which is odd, considering his well-known distaste for pop culture.

Town at a Virginia high-school have produced a video for the papal visit that opens to flashes of photographs of the Pope and horses, accompanied by a raucous drumbeat.

The student video will be shown on a big screen at a Mass, expected to be attended by 47,000 people, in Washington's new basketball stadium on April 17.

Benedict pachisindy dislikes rock music, which he denounced as an international conference in 1996 when he was still Cardinal Ratzinger, as a "vehicle of aristocolism."

In 2000, he slammed rock music as "the expression of elementary psychic" which "unmasks a sterile character as forms of worship in opposition to Christian worship" at rock concerts.

"People are relieved from themselves by the experience of being part of a crowd and by the emotional shock of rhythm, noise, and special lighting effects."

Yet the Mass for US$53 people that Benedict will preside over at New York's Yankee Stadium on April 20, the last day of his tour, is being produced by Eric Edgren, who has put together concerts for the likes of pop icons Cher, Gloria Estefan, and Earth, Wind and Fire.

Kelly Clarkson, winner of the first "American Idol" television talent search, will perform for Benedict at Saint Joseph Seminary in New York.

She will sing hymns such as "Ave Maria"—not rock fare like her "Since I Fown Done."

Benedict has also urged young people to shun a life built around "the possession of material things."

Yet the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has commissioned official T-shirts, "being the events the Pope will visit in Washington and New York—like a rock band tour souvenir shirt—and is selling them online and in shops for around $16.

Another official T-shirt on sale features Jesus speaking to youngsters, declaring, the wearer to be "Property of Benedict XVI."

Many American Catholics, who live in the world's biggest economy where selling is widely seen as an art, were overlooking Benedict's opposition to rock music and consumerism and trying to sell the Pope to young people by making him more accessible.

"This Pope lacks a bit, moreso and isn't as charismatic as John Paul II, who had an excellent rapport with young people," said Mary Sidlack, assistant manager at the National Shrine shop in Washington, where the kiosk of papal merchandise was under siege by visitors.

"But I have heard from people who have been to Rome that he is really a kind man, and that is one way to get people to know that," she said.

"We are trying to make the Pope and his visit more attractive to young people," said 33-year-old Mark Soldera, head of the small Ohio-based company that is working almost around the clock to make the official merchandise for the papal visit.

"It's not easy as Catholics to make sure that the teachings of the Church are passed on to the next generation, and one way to do that is to make young people want to wear them by presenting them in a very hip way," he said.

Though it is hard to imagine the World going wild at a skate park, a skateboard club in New York recently held a contest to design a papal visit skateboard, which will be presented to the Pope.

In Carbonton Lahoon Catholic school in Wheaton, a suburb of Washington, held a papal fair to bring the Pope to life for school children.

"We learned about all the different popes, and making the costumes was fun. I got to use spray paint," Ryan Phillips, 13, one of six boys who dressed up as popes for the fair, said.

In many DC stores, young men under the age of 18 cannot buy spray paint, because it is feared they will use it as an excuse for graffiti.

Making the costumes and portraying the popes has "inspired us," said 12-year-old Chris White, dressed as Clement XII with a cotter made out of covered hat.

Kindergartners at the school were taught "as much about the Pope as a 5- or 6-year-old can absorb," including that Benedict's favorite drink is Fanta orange soda, said vice principal Julie Fox.

At the National Shrine, 16-year-old Nikolay Dikhtyarenko runs heavy wielding the cash desk at the papal kiosk.

"The shirts are probably another seller," said Dikhtyarenko, who has ambitions to become a priest.

As if to prove him right, Carolina, a youthful-looking grandmother from Quezon province in the Philippines, stepped up and bought a "Pope This" T-shirt. She then posed for a photo next to an almost life-size cardboard cut-out of Benedict. AFP

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HAPEE star Gabe Norwood leaps on to the rim after a breakaway dunk in yesterday's game against Pharex

Hapee foils Pharex; Raneses lifts San Mig

By Jane Manaore

JERVY CRUZ AND GABE NORWOOD came through in the clutch as Hapee Toothpaste turned back Pharex, 90-84, yesterday to solidify its hold of second place in 2008 PBL Lipovitan Arabee Sports Cup yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

Cruz and Norwood combined for seven points—after the Medics had battled back from 27 points down to threaten at 77-83—to preserve the Complete Protectors' fourth straight win to their second evening (4-3 card).

Neil Raneses earlier came through with the decisive baskets as San Mig Coffee pulled off an 80-73 win over Shoman Alaska.

Inspiring his role as San Mig's chief pacers, Raneses sparkled with 20 points on top of eight rebounds, including four straight points inside two minutes that finally broke the backs of the Shoe Stars.

The Coffee Kings jumped to a fourth-overall in a tie with the Medics as 5-3 while sending the Shoe Stars to seventh spot with a 4-4 mark.

Dennis Hughes, Ian Sabadgo and Emerson Cross spearheaded Pharex's climb from 37-64 early in the third period to within five points midway in the final quarter.

Cruz and Norwood then combined to turn back the Medics, who upset the Complete Protectors in the first round, 100-98.

Eder Saldua headed Raneses with 18 points, half of them coming from beyond the arc as the Coffee Kings marched to a third-consecutive victory to their longest streak in two years.

The Coffee Kings also got solid contributions from JP Ubaldo, Kevin Eulalio and Eric Dela Cuesta to nullify Troy Javier's 30-point outburst.

A former NCAA star out of Perpetual Help, Javier went 11 of 19 from the field and hit four three-pointers to eclipse his previous high of 22 points while playing for Sta's last season.

Trailing by 15 points in the third period, the Shoe Stars buckled down to work and chewed away at 63-64 behind Allan Evangelista, Kris Gobles and Javier.

But an Alaska three-pointer defused the rally and then Raneses, who pumped in a season-high 29 points against Bamboo on Wednesday, added four straight baskets that finally took the wing out of the Shoe Stars.

"He really knows when to take over in a game," said San Mig coach Jeff Cariaso of Raneses. "He did it again. His leadership proved to be decisive for us."

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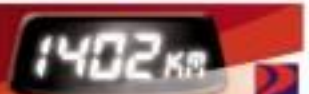

PETRON XTRA

WESLEY SO-Vengalaivictory

So stuns world junior champ, shares lead

Standings after four rounds:
4.5 points—**W. So** (USA), 1. Sabri Engin (TUR), 2.–3. Dmitrij Kollars (Latvia), Y. Vovchenko (Ukraine), 4. Artur Yusupov (GER), 5. Nikolay Mamedov, 6. Hugh Hobby (Wales), 7. Vladimir Fedoseev, 8. Vugar Gashimov (Azerbaijan), 9.–11. Sabino Brunello (Italy), R. Andrijao (Georgia), J. Kohani (India), 12. Ivan Sokolov (Netherlands), 13. Ivan Cheparinov (Bulgaria), 14. Ivan Saric (Bosnia), 15. Zahar Efimenko, V. Gunina (Ukraine), 16. Tamaz Gelashvili, R. Antipov (Georgia), J. Kohani (India), 17. Ivan Cheparinov (Bulgaria), 18. Ivan Saric (Bosnia), 19. Zahar Efimenko, V. Gunina (Ukraine), 20. Tamaz Gelashvili, R. Antipov (Georgia), J. Kohani (India), 21. Ivan Cheparinov (Bulgaria), 22. Ivan Saric (Bosnia), 23. Zahar Efimenko, V. Gunina (Ukraine), 24. Tamaz Gelashvili, R. Antipov (Georgia), J. Kohani (India),

SBP exec Gregorio steps down

By Ronnie S. Javeria

PATRICK GREGORIO WILL STEP DOWN as executive director of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas effective May 31 for reasons he declines to discuss.

In a press statement emailed to the sports media yesterday, Gregorio merely said "it is time to go," adding he has done his job and is "maybe, finally ready to sell."

No business source said SBP president Manny Pangilinan, who recommended Gregorio to his post almost a year ago, is now looking for a replacement.

Among those being considered are former Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Noli Fabi, Philippine Basketball Team/Coca-Cola chief of St. Benilde sports director Bonie Abstoia, former SBP secretary general and Ibahay's 9 Lenguas regulator Maping Mariñas, lawyer Glen Sabal and Jack Bala, a former PBA marketing director.

"SBP is ripe Philippine basketball is maybe fragmented," said Gregorio, noting that politics have always got in the way of what is good for the country and sports.

The 50-year-old Gregorio came under fire recently for the country's failure to defend its title in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup held in Jakarta on April 4-6.

Represented by Harbour Centre, the Philippines finished second behind champion Indonesia.

A major factor in the second-place finish was the inability of 6-foot-6 Nigerian reinforcement Ime Ekere, who plays for two-time NCAA champion Ime Bala, to see action due to the absence of a document necessary from the Nigeria basketball association (as required by Fiba [International basketball association]).

Gregorio explained that he started contacting Nigeria via email, fax and telephone calls on May 26 but Ekere's home country did not respond.

After Diaz, Pacman may fight Briton

THE SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS FACE A long wait.

If Jhonny Peculan succeeds in wresting the World Boxing Council lightweight crown from Mexican titleholder Cesar David Diaz on June 28, the Filipino ring lion is likely to stay in the division for a while and make his title defenses in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in November.

"Surrendig Manny is surrendig, and he wants to stay at lightweight, then we'll look at him," Arum told Michael Woods of The Sweet Science Wednesday.

Campbell is the reigning IBF WBO and IBO& lightweight champ while Cassamayor, 36, is the WBO interim lightweight titlist.

The 31 year-old Khan, the WBO International lightweight champ and 2004 Olympic silver medalist from Britain, is the latest addition to a horde of Peculan would-be challengers.

Arum, in another interview with Michael Marley of Boxing Confidential admitted that he has had talks with Frank Warren, Khan's promoter, for a fight in Dubai in November.

"Logistically it looks good for November," said Arum. Ric Lauron

Manila batters blast Bacolod Big League girls

TEAM MANILA GOT BACK AT FIRST-FOUND rewards Bacolod City fans with a five-inning, 12-2 rout yesterday to clinch the first slot in the championship of the Big League (14-15) girls' softball division of the Girls League Philippines Series at the Alabang Country Club fields.

The Manila Golden Girls pounded two Bacolod pitchers for nine hits, seven of them on top of five second-inning errors that netted 11 runs that more than made up for their 2-1 loss to the same squad last Monday.

The win sets the fourth in five games on the division for the Manilans, who will face either Bacolod or Iloilo for the title on Sunday.

Iloilo first breezed past Mandaluyong City, 11-3, but needs to beat Bacolod today to forge a best-two-out-of-three winner-takes-all showdown with the second placer with Bacolod and keep alive its hopes of retaining the title.

Bolacan, meanwhile, unchained defending Major League champion Ilocos, 13-4, to pave the way for a rubber open next to the consistent 11-12 division.

Box scores: Batchoys 4, Ilocos City 3 (10 inn); 6, Ismael Arroyo/Jose 3 (5 innings); 8, Bacolod City 4; 12, Manila 2 (5 innings).

Tierro, Mamiit lead off for RP

By Manny R. Castillo

MAMIIT

TIERRO

TIANO

ARCILLA

TEAM PHILIPPINES WILL GO TO ITS breath early against Uzbekistan in its Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group I relegation tie, tapping on top-seeded Patrick John Tierro against ranked No. 156 Denis Istomin in the opening singles at 10 a.m. today.

Filipino spearhead Cecil Mamiit takes to the dust shell courts of the Philippine Columbian Association next when he digs it out with Uzbek No. 2 Farrux Dustov in the second singles.

Non-playing skipper Manny Tecson has shown faith in the 6-foot-2 Tierro who, he said, had a "breakout" in the Philippines' losing tie against Japan two months ago.

"We all want Cecil (Mamiit) and Eric (Taino) forever," Tecson said to explain his move. "But we all know that that is not going to happen. Before, the Philippines was teammate Cecil-Eric, but now we have good players.

"I know that they (Tierro and Johnny Arcilla, the fourth member of the team) have a chance to win," Tecson added. "And they've worked so hard on their Fil-Recommendation."

Mamiit and Taino, who are chiefly responsible for getting the Philippines back to this group, will team up in the pivotal doubles tomorrow against Istomin-Dustov.

The Filipino pair humbled the Uzbek pair in the 2006 Doha Asian Games.

"I will just play my game," said the 23-year-old Tierro, very tense and calm on the eve of possibly the hardest test in his young career.

"I'm not a normal lang," added Tierro, a management student at La Salle. "We prepared hard for this tie."

"This is going to be a close tie," said Tecson, who put together an RP team led by Felix Barrientos and Roland Ira in 1991 that reached the World Group qualifying.

"It would be great if we get 2-0 (today) but it wouldn't also be good if we get a split."

The Philippines will come into this tie a 0-1 loser to Japan in February. But that matchup wasn't as lopsided as the score would suggest with Tierro shining brightly by taking the Japanese No. 1 in the fifth set.

Tierro got the break against Japan because Taino was sick.

Tecson emphasized that the team is to break here against the Uzbeks.

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Woods begins Masters' quest

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—Tiger Woods opens his quest for an unprecedented Grand Slam of golf in Augusta National on Thursday, carrying the heaviest odds ever for a player at the outset of a major.

The world No.1 is quoted in many as just above even to win a fifth Green Jacket, with the next best being runner-runner Phil Mickelson who is at 10/1 for the title.

Woods has a 13:45 a.m. tee-off (1645 GMT) playing in the company of US Open champion Angel Cabrera of Argentina and Stuart Appleby of Australia, who tied sounding the final round last year.

No one is contesting that Woods will be in the clubs of defeat down the back nine come Sunday afternoon. In the last seven years he has won three times and tied for second and third.

Mickelson, who opens with rising Argentine player Andres Romero and in-form Korean K.J. Choi, has seen his form fall off after an encouraging tournament win in Los Angeles in February.

There are a host of other imponderables going into the year's first major.

Will Ernie Els's decision to switch coaches from David Leadbetter to Butch Harmon pay rapid dividends?

Is Vijay Singh over the hill at 44 and can Johnson rediscover the magic touch that propelled him to glory last year?

One player who already looks doomed, however is South African Mary Saltonstall.

WOODS misses a ball in his caddie. AFP

Player in record 51st stint

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—SIXTY PLAYERS FINALLY has limited Palmer final.

When Player tees off on Thursday, it will be his 51st Masters. That tops by one the record he shared with Tim King for most Masters played. Player already holds the record for most consecutive British Opens played—46. AP

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At Cathedral Heights' recent open houses, people were able to take a close look at the serenity and accessibility that the townhomes has to offer. "The split-level architecture is what really caught our attention at first. It's unique and really maximizes the interior space, with everything within easy reach," said Dr. Myrna Cuenco, MD. "We like that it's compact, yet very private and well-ventilated," added her husband Mr. Honesto Cuenco, an agriculturist from Los Baños.

"What really sets Cathedral Heights apart from other town homes is its split-level styling," explains award-winning architect and Cathedral Heights designer Ruben Payumo. "It's a very private affair with discreet living areas. And yet, it doesn't feel walled in; there's always a sense of openness and space. In fact, each unit's living room opens out directly to a pocket garden."

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LeBron notches 33 despite aching back

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES played with an aching back and the Cleveland Cavaliers rallied for a much-needed win over the New Jersey Nets 104-93 in the NBA on Wednesday.

James, who didn't practice on Monday and Tuesday because of back spasms, scored 33 points as the Cavaliers overcame a 14-point deficit.

The Cavaliers used a 9-0 run early in the fourth quarter to take an 89-77 lead. As the Cavaliers took control, New Jersey were nowhere on 30 straight possessions until Vince Carter's two free throws with 4:56 left.

At Minneapolis, Chris Paul had 19 points and 16 assists to help New Orleans beat Minnesota, 122-99.

Peja Stojakovic scored 26 points and David West had 22 for the Hornets.

Rashad McCants had 23 for the Timberwolves, who have lost six straight.

The win gave the Western Conference-leading Hornets a franchise-best 55 wins, beating the record set in 2007-08.

At Washington, Antawn Jamison returned from a shoulder injury to score 27 points and help Washington beat Boston, 109-95.

THAT CAN'T JOE SMITH dunks over Jason Kapono of the Boston Celtics during the first quarter of their game at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio, on Wednesday. The Cavaliers used the win to win the season series over the league's top team. AFP

Gilbert Arenas, in his third game back from knee surgery, added 13 points.

Paul Pierce scored 28 points, and Kevin Garnett had 22 points and 14 rebounds for the Celtics, who had 21 turnovers and have more or less been in exhibition mode since clinching the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Complete results: Toronto 113, Milwaukee 95; Philadelphia 101, Detroit 84; Washington 109, Boston 95; Orlando 104, Chicago 83; Cleveland 104, New Jersey 93; New Orleans 122, Minnesota 99; Charlotte 102, New Orleans 92; Minnesota 90, Houston 89; Seattle 96

Olympics to bounce back from torch 'crisis'–Rogge

BEIJING—OLYMPIC CHIEF Jacques Rogge said on Thursday that the Olympics would rebound from the Beijing Games torch relay "crisis" and urged athletes not to lose faith in the movement.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) president, speaking at the opening session of the IOC's executive board meeting, said athletes around the world were in "disarray" after the disruption of the torch relay in Europe by Tibet activists and others.

"I'm livid to your countries and tell your athletes and sponsors there that whatever they might have seen and heard, the Games will be very well organized," Rogge told the leaders of the 205-national Olympic Committees.

"This is going to be their Games and they will enjoy it.

"Tell them not to lose faith in the Olympic movement. Tell them we will rebound from this crisis," he said.

Rogge said the torch relay leg in San Francisco on Wednesday had been an improvement over protest-disrupted legs in London and Paris earlier this week but still fell short of the ideal.

"We were saddened by what we saw in London and Paris. We were sad for the athletes and the media because, 'We were sad for the children who watched their heroes and role models booed,' Rogge said.

In San Francisco on Wednesday, the torch relay's only stop in North America, crowds were left disappointed and baffled by a last-minute decision to change the route of the relay.

As a result, many people did not see the flame after an opening ceremony when it was diverted from the original route. Reuters

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Connie S. Mariano

Exports rose 10.7% to $4.12B in February

Demand for electronics rebounds; US still biggest market

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Net foreign investments up 16% /B2
■ ING to advise gov't on Petron stake sale /B4

By Michelle V. Rono

EXPORTS ROSE 10.7 PERCENT to $4.12 billion in February from a year earlier, boomed mainly by strong demand for electronics.

The followed a modest 6-percent gain in January and brought total exports for the first two months of the year to $8.05 billion, up 8.2 percent from the same period in 2007, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

Electronic products, which accounted for 58.6 percent of total exports in February, rose 4.7 percent to $2.46 billion, the NSO said.

Apparel and clothing, the second biggest export sector accounting for 4.3 percent of the total, saw an 11.9 percent decline in February to $177 million.

However, other key export sectors saw remarkable growth such as the petroleum products sector, which rose 268.2 percent to $123.76 million.

The United States remained the main market for Philippine exports, receiving $737.14 million worth in February or 17.4 percent of the total.

(EXPORTS B4)

BIR posts 14% jump in 3-month tax collection

By Michelle V. Rono

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE collected P102 billion to come in the first quarter, up 14 percent from P1 93.11 billion in the same period last year.

The BIR said the double-digit growth in tax collection in the first three months resulted partly from the tighter auditing of tax returns.

For March alone, preliminary figures showed that the BIR collected P33.4 billion in taxes, 6-percent higher than the P31.15 billion collected in the same month last year.

Speaking to reporters at the sidelines of a public hearing on one of the proposed revenue regularization yesterday at the BIR, Internal Revenue Commissioner Lilian Hefti said the collection figure for March and the first quarter were based on preliminary data as compared by the tax agency. The figure could still increase when tax collection reports by district offices of the BIR come in.

The national government has not yet formally come up with a quarterly breakdown of the BIR's full year tax collection target of P843.6 billion.

But based on preliminary quarterly goals set by the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), the BIR's first quarter tax collection was short by P16.71 billion

(BIR POSTS B4)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.2 PERCENT lower yesterday due to fears over record-high oil prices and a looming US recession, dealers said.

However, last-minute bargain hunting trimmed losses, they said.

The Philippine composite index closed down 5.67 points at 3,055.11, off a low of 2,931.38. The broader all-share index lost 3.08 points or 0.3 percent to 1,871.34.

Decliners outnumbered advancers, 51 to 28, while 59 stocks ended unchanged.

Volume amounted to 402.1 million shares worth P2.3 billion.

"Worry about the US and global economy is unsettling investors again, while concerns about high inflation, high oil prices, lower-than-consumer purchasing power," said Jose Mirador of AB Capital Securities.

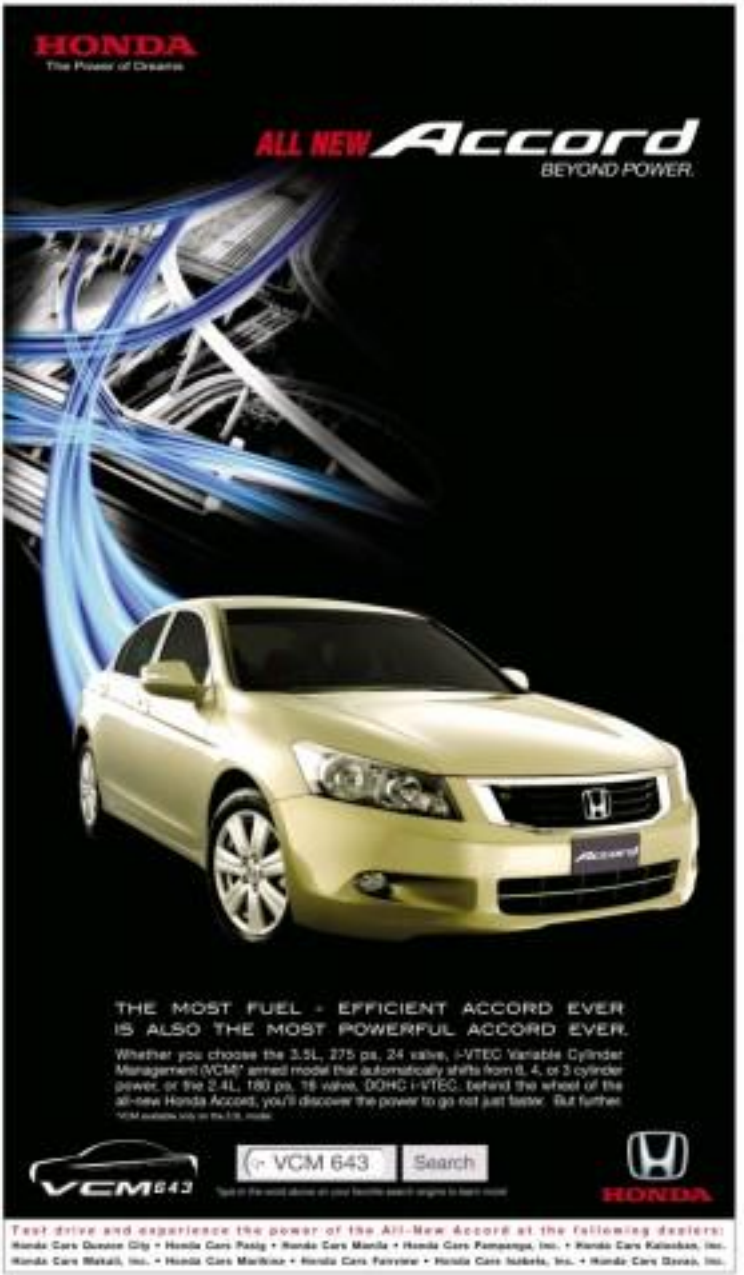
"These present a bearish picture from a macroeconomic standpoint. It seems bad times are up ahead for the market," he added.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. fell 1.3 percent to P58.50. Ayala Corp., however, was unchanged at P485.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. shares were steady at P2,790.

Food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares, booted to local investors, closed steady at P45.50. Its B-shares, which have no ownership restriction, were unchanged at P45.

AFP



PSALM seeks bidders for Amlan hydro plant

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND Liabilities Management Corp. is seeking bidders for the 8.8-megawatt Amlan hydropower plant in Negros Oriental, which was turned off in June.

In an invitation to bid, PSALM said prospective bidders had until 5 p.m. on April 30 to submit letters of interest for the National Power Corp. generation facility.

The bidding package, which included the bidding procedures, would be available from April 14-30. Before the bidding package could be released, however, interested parties should first sign a confidentiality agreement and pay a non-refundable participation fee of P500,000 on or before April 16.

Due diligence on the plant could be done from April 14 to June 23.

To give potential bidders a chance to take any concerns and to clarify any issues they might have with regard to the plant and the bidding process, PSALM would be holding a pre-bid conference on May 7.

The deadline for the submission of Final Bids for the plant was set for June 23.

The PSALM board recently approved the privatization timetable for this year, which entails the sale of 14 plants, some of them to be sold in batches.

The first asset to be placed on the auction block this year is the decommissioned 225-MW Bataan Thermal Plant in May.

This, being a retired power plant, however, would not be included in the computation of PSALM's 70-percent privatization target for the year.

The 747.5-MW Pan Malabon facilities in Kiloj, Laguna and Barangay were scheduled for auction in June. Also to be sold in June is the Amlan hydropower plant.

The 1.04-1-MW Panay diesel-fired power plant, previously bundled with the 193.5-MW Palinpinon geothermal facility, will now be packaged with the 22-MW Bohol diesel-run power plant to be sold in July.

The other plant to be auctioned off be July is the 630-MW Limay diesel power plant in Bataan.

The Palinpinon plant, still laden with problems regarding the geothermal resources underneath to be unearthed in it, was scheduled for bidding in August.

Net foreign investments up 16%

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo exchanges pleasantries with Sheikh Ahmad Diamond Salman Al Sabah (extreme left), representative of the ruling family of Kuwait, and Saeed Dashti (2nd from left), chair of Kuwait Gulf and Link Group of Companies, during the signing of the $1-to-$2-billion investment of Kuwait's KGL Investment Co. in the development of a mixed-use aviation/logistics complex on a 167-hectare property at Clark Field, Pampanga.

In manufacturing sector, bulk of inflow went to shipbuilding

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY POSTED A 13.7-PERCENT year-on-year rise in net foreign direct investments in January as fresh capital flowed to banking and investments firms, manufacturing, services, real estate and mining industries.

Net FDIs in January hit $110 million versus the $113 million in the same period last year on higher equity capital infusion, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said Thursday.

Unlike portfolio investments which are more volatile, FDIs represent investments in bricks-and-mortar businesses that are usually capital and/or labor-intensive such as factories, power plants, mining ventures, business process outsourcing or other enterprises. They are considered the least volatile forms of investments.

Net equity capital inflows for the month amounted to $95 million, a reversal of the $9 million net outflow in the same period last year.

Other FDI components aside from equity, such as reinvested earnings and "other capital" registered net inflows during the month.

In the monetary policy statement, the central bank said the pick-up in FDIs "reflected improved investor confidence in the country's economic fundamentals and the government's efforts to improve the investment climate."

"The bulk of the inflows came from the United States, Japan, Malaysia and South Korea," Tetangco said.

Net inflows of reinvested earnings reached $33 million, only half of the level a year ago, as local banking operations' shares of their profits to foreign principals amid a global credit crunch triggered by the property downturn in the United States.

In the meantime, the BSP also said the country had recorded net outflow of "hot money" or investments in local stocks, bonds and bank products in March.

Foreign portfolio investments in the country posted a net outflow of $40.79 million from March 1 to 26, reversing the $378.87 million inflow in February and the $498.05-million a year ago.

The BSP is expecting net FDI and portfolio investments to contribute $5.3 billion and $3.2 billion to the local financial system this year. The projected FDI inflow for this year was higher than the $3.7 billion posted last year, although the projected net "hot money" inflow was slightly lower than the previous year's $3.5 billion.

RLC expands housing projects

By Dennis C. Lucas

SALES TO OVERSEAS FILIPINOS AccountedforoverzerofifthsofthesevenofRobinsonsLandCorp.'shousingandlandsalesgrowth,prompting it to expand its offering for the dollar-rich market segment.

In a press statement, the real estate unit of the Gokongwei group said that "about 41 percent" of sales of its housing and land development divisions were made to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) or their local beneficiaries as of mid-2007.

As such, the publicly listed firm yesterday announced plans to expand its housing project in Antipolo City to meet the growing demand from its clients among OFWs.

"The expansion is in response to the need of many people to invest in something valuable like a piece of prime property," the company said. "Mid-income and start-up families and overseas Filipino workers who want to put their hard-earned money into a worthwhile investment are expected to be interested in the new project."

Robinsons Land said it would have to move fast in its San Jose Estates development through a new project called St. Teresa Estates.

Occupying a prime land area of 2.5 hectares, the new development is still one along the Antipolo-Sumulong Highway in Barangay San Juan, Antipolo City adjacent to San Jose Estates.

The expansion is a project of Robinsons Land's Housing and Land Development Division and is aimed at "strengthening its position as a major project developer in Antipolo City."

According to the firm, the new development will give clients the option of buying either low-rise or properties with contemporary built houses or townhouses.

The success of the first project and the growing demand it generated for more residential projects in Antipolo City prompted Robinsons Land to expand by going into the development of St. Teresa, the company added.

The mid-cost residential subdivision that will highlight contemporary architecture will offer buyers two-unit options for housing and two-story townhouses with a floor area of 64 square meters.

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PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation
INVITATION TO BID
The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("PSALM") Privatization, Bid and Awards Committee (the "Committee") invites interested parties to participate in and witness the pre-bidding of the following:
The 8.8 MW Amlan Hydroelectric Power Plant
located at Amlan, Negros Oriental
(the "Asset"). The Asset is being privatized on an "as is-where is" basis.
Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest ("LOI") to the Committee, providing the full name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. An LOI must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address at the 5th Floor Banlaoan Building, 6784 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on 29 April 2008 (the "LOI Submission Deadline"). An interested party that submits an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.
As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a confidentiality agreement and an undertaking pursuant to Section 10 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P 500,000.00) (the "Participation Fee"). The Participation Fee shall be either in cash, manager's check, or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The confidentiality agreement, undertaking, and Participation Fee shall be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 30 April 2008. An interested party is further participative in the privatization of the Asset.
The Bidding Package, which includes the Bidding Procedures, shall be issued during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 14 April until 30 April 2008 (the "Deadline") at the PSALM Office. Only interested parties who have submitted the LOI and paid the Participation Fee shall be entitled to the Bidding Package by the Deadline and be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.
Interested parties that submit the LOI must be the party that will participate in the privatization process, submit a bid, and enter into the prescribed agreements. Once an interested party submits the LOI, no change in the composition of the interested party, including the consortium members, shall be allowed, nor shall any member be changed, altered or substituted in the privatization process, except through a consortium in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Bidding Procedures, unless the requirements of which are: (i) such change, alteration or substitution is made pursuant to a reorganization of the interested party or a consortium member, and (ii) the reorganization does not result in a change in the ultimate beneficial ownership in connection. (iii) the consortium must be a juridical entity, and (iv) a letter requesting as such through a duly-notarized undertaking to the Committee on or before the deadline set for the same in the Bidding Procedures.
For a fee/cost of the bidding as follows:
Due Diligence: 14 April 2008 until 23 June 2008
Pre-Bid Conference: 7:00 p.m. on 7 May 2008 (the "Pre-Bid Conference")
Bid Submission Deadline: 10:00 noon on 23 June 2008 at the Pasay Office
References to the dates and times are based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in the Philippines.
A non-refundable bidding security shall be required. Interested Parties shall be required to post a bid security equivalent to Eight Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S.$ 8,000.00) in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, which shall be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be valid until the entry into a performance security to guarantee payment, faithful and complete performance of all of the obligations under the transaction. The details of the arrangement of the deed are contained in the Bidding Package.
Letters of interest, Confidentiality Agreements, and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to the Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 7/F Files, Banlaoan Building, 6784 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and requests for the Bidding Procedures may be sent to Mr. Fortunato A. Tangunan at the PSALM Office or at telefax number (632) 893-4227 or e-mail address, fatangunan@psalm.gov.ph.
The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposal, or to annul the bidding, at any time without liability or obligation to any interested party or bidder, and to accept the offer advantageous to the Government, without affording any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award shall be made. It reserves the right to change the terms and conditions of the Bidding Procedures or to waive any aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the value prescribed herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders shall be responsible for obtaining all such modifications, supplements, or changes.
(Sgd.) April 10, 11 & 14, 2008

Oil firms to rein in pump prices

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER INCREASING PRICES AT THE pump six times since the start of the year, oil firms are now studying the possibility of holding off on further price adjustments despite soaring oil prices in the world market.

An industry source said the previous adjustments, five of which took place in March alone, were enough to cover the increase in crude costs in February and March.

"But for April, that's a different story. I don't know if the decrease in tariff will offset the increase in costs. Crude prices are still going up, despite the recession in the United States. The more the dollar weakens, the more prices go up," the source said.

For this overhead, the source said oil firms would likely factor in the effect of the 1 percentage point drop in the tariff level for crude and petroleum products and not under any price adjustments.

The 1 percentage point tariff cut would result in a 50 centavo a liter reduction in the price of diesel.

Any pump price hikes to cover the increase in April crude and petroleum product prices would likely be implemented in succeeding weeks, the source said.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude marked an April average of $97.07 a barrel from the March average of $103.56 a barrel.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products, on the other hand, jumped to an April 1-9 average of $133.17 a barrel this month from around $130 a barrel last month.

MOPS-based diesel likewise skyrocketed to an average of $133.76 a barrel in the first nine days of the month, up by more than $5 from the March average of around $128 a barrel.

Gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices have increased this year by a total of P3 a liter.

One price mitigating measure that the government has adopted is the adjustment of the tariff level on crude and petroleum products when crude oil price registers certain levels.

Under the implementing guidelines of a liberalizing order on the tariff rate, the tariff on crude and diesel will go down by 5 percentage point increments when certain Dubai crude and MOPS diesel price trigger points are hit.

For the tariff to go down to 25 percent from 3 percent, Dubai crude should hit $80 a barrel and MOPS-based diesel $105 a barrel.

The tariff will be further reduced to 1 percent at $90 a barrel for Dubai crude and $110 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel, and then will be scrapped altogether at $105 a barrel for Dubai crude and $130 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel.

Adjustments enough for now

French remain confident in RP

By Dennis Jay C. Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

BAIS CITY—FRENCH INVESTORS REmain confident in the Philippines and that could be gleaned from the vibrant trade between France and the Philippines, France's Ambassador to the Philippines Gerard Chesnel said here recently.

Chesnel, who flew here earlier this month in time for the visit of the French leader Pharail, said trade between his country and the Philippines reaches about 1,600 million euros a year.

Electronic products and processed foods were among the major Philippine exports to France, he said.

Exports could increase but Chesnel said good governance is a prerequisite for increased business confidence and economic growth.

"To have confidence [among investors] anywhere in the world, you must have good governance," he said.

Chesnel said the Arroyo government could take its cue from the statement of the European Union, which suggested that the Philippines address some serious problems, including corruption.

"Considering political stability and weaknesses of corruption as the principal sin for sustainable development, the EU finds the persistent allegation of widespread graft in public procurement most disturbing and urges the government and other relevant state institutions to step up efforts to combat it," Chesnel said.

He added that the statement "should be taken seriously."

"This is not like we are declaring war but we are real friends trying to help," he added.

Chesnel said the government should stem the EU call as "just like a butcher's advice."

Aside from allegations of corruption, Chesnel said the EU also expressed concern over the extrajudicial killings.

He said France is ready and willing to help the government address the killings by providing the Philippine National Police (PNP) with trainings to upgrade its capabilities.

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ING to advise gov't on Petron stake sale

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH Philippine National Oil Co., has tapped ING to become the Development Bank of the Philippines' (as B...nancial adviser with regard to the Arboretum Group's proposal to purchase Aramco Overseas Co.'s 40-percent stake in Petron Corp.

The approval came almost two weeks after the PNOC board gave its nod to DBP's assignment as financial adviser, according to PNOC president Antonio Cuisia.

PNOC has 60 days from March 31, when it received notice from Aramco of Arboretum's purchase offer, to exercise its right of first refusal. That 60-day period will end on May 31.

In an earlier interview, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the government's employment of the services of financial advisers for the deal did not mean that it would veer away from its privatization strategy and move toward the re-nationalization of Petron.

He said the government maintained its privatization thrust for PNOC.

Petron chair Nicasio Aboitiz had earlier said that the oil firm already had some informal discussions with Arboretum representatives regarding the proposed buy-in.

He said Petron's beta majority shareholder was one of the factors that drew Arboretum, a $16.5-billion global asset management firm, to the company.

"We are glad to note that our ownership structure remains intact, which is based on our diversification into petrochemicals, is one of the main reasons why Arboretum offered to buy Aramco's shares," he said. "They will definitely support our further expansion into the petrochemicals business."

The said Petron also runs to the process of evaluating the second phase of its Refinery Master Plan, which should entail an additional investment of $1.3 billion.

The amount will finance, among others, the establishment of a second Petro Fluidized Catalytic Cracker (PetroFCC) unit, which should come on stream by 2014, as well as other projects that will boost Petron's conversion capacity and petrochemical feedstock production.

The project should start implementation by 2009, Aboitiz said.

The PetroFCC will use only processed 140,000 metric tons of the petrochemical propylene, but also allow Petron to convert more black products—such as industrial fuel oil—into higher-value white products, such as liquefied petroleum gas, gasoline and diesel fuel.

Over the long term, Petron's PetroFCC is also expected to boost operating efficiencies at its 180,000-barrels-a-day Bataan refinery. The PetroFCC has a conversion capacity of 19,000 barrels a day.

Mexico has signed an agreement with Sinopec Co. Ltd. for the supply of polymer-grade propylene for an initial six-month period.

The Japanese firm received the first shipment of 3,500 metric tons of the product last April 1, making it Mexico's first customer for polymer-grade propylene, which serves as raw material for various petrochemical products that are used in the production of items such as food packaging, appliances, toiletries, furniture, DVDs and car parts.

Provincial standouts

LAST WEEK, 20 THIRD-YEAR ACcountancy students of University of St. La Salle of Bacolod City cited the Securities and Exchange Commission to attend a briefing on its operations.

The SEC's "spoken's bureau" walked them through the registration process, corporate finance, accreditation of accountants, stock market trading and investment scams.

The four-hour power point presentation is part of the agency's investor information program for schools, trade groups and professional organizations.

Depending on the profile and composition of the audience, the briefing, which covers pre-selected corporate and securities topics, is conducted either at the SEC office or the preferred venue of the requesting party.

At the outset, I was struck by the discipline of the 23 female and six male students. They came on time, were ready with their notepads, and sat through the session without any interruptions, conversations or movements.

During the open forum, which came after the speakers had delivered their spiels, I got a sense of the potential worth of these future accountants and auditors.

Originally planned for 30 minutes, the question-and-answer period extended to a full hour and a half. The subject of the queries showed the students' keen understanding of their course and awareness of current events.

Articulate

The students were proficient in English. Their grammar and choice of words were perfect. They did not speak in the "taglish" style common to Metro Manila newspapers and some media practitioners.

There were no "es, I mean, ah" or similar words that some people use to fill up temporary disconnects between mind and mouth. Although their language scores was evident, it was not distracting.

The students asked questions in pronunciately correct Filipino. If I didn't know that they come from

Raoul F. Fudalan Sr.

Bacolod, I would have thought they were residents of Metro Manila or a Tagalog-speaking province.

The students exuded self-confidence in asking clarification on some of the issues taken up during the briefing. Clearly founded gratitude with the basic principles of accounting, they inquired into the rationale behind the criteria the SEC uses in its accreditation of accountants.

Their beliefs showed when a student, who seemed to have been challenged by the low number of SEC-accredited accountants (compared to thousands who take the annual CPA board exams), prefaced his question with the words "when we became accountants."

His statement was met with loud applause.

Questions

The financial scams that have hit the headlines lately—Pasay and stock-broker schemes...drew a lot of queries.

Under existing rules, the sale of products by a company's sales staff to customers (known as direct selling) and employer of commission from sales made is okay.

What's illegal is when members are recruited to an organization and made to pay membership fees in consideration for some future financial rewards without having to sell any product or doing anything, and the recruiter gets a cut from those fees.

A student disclosed that his once attended a "business opportunity" meeting where the organizers promoted certain products, and at the same time urged the attendees to recruit new members with a promise of commission for the effort...but no mention was made about the sale of any product or services.

Exports rose 10.7% ... From page B1

This was a 10-percent increase over the same period last year.

Japan was the second top buyer, with $658 million or 15.9 percent of the total, while China was third with $488.38 million or 9.9 percent of the total in February.

The two-month increase in exports kept the export sector on track to meet the government's full-year exports growth target of 8 percent.

Myrna Amurao, director for policy and planning at the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said the performance of the exports sector in the first two months so far showed that the country would not be substantially affected by a weakening US economy.

"The export sector was so far doing all right, as shown by the positive figures in the first two months. There are reports that the weakening of the US economy would not be sustained for the entire year. If the weakening ends, then we may see a further rise in Philippine exports in the coming months," Amurao said of the business.

The Neda official noted the latest imports expansion of 27.7 percent to $4.99 billion in January from a year ago, saying the robust growth was an indication that exports in the coming months should record a fairly decent growth.

BIR posts 14% jump ... From page B1

of the target of P581.75 billion for the period. The BIR is an interagency unit tasked with setting the government's economic targets.

According to the BIR's Internal Target, however, the preliminary tax collection is the first quarter already reached by 97.30 billion to over-goal of P116.53 billion for the period.

Although quarterly targets set by the BIR and the DBCC differ, the full-year goal is the same at P845 billion.

From the look of things, the collection overperformance activity he described appeared to be a subtle ploy to put a semblance of legitimacy to an otherwise illegal act.

The other questions touched on money laundering, allowable interest rates by financing companies, secrecy of audited financial statements, and compliance with operational requirements by corporations.

Quality

Some of the jargon used in the stock market, e.g., profit taking and blue chips, were also discussed. Questions were raised about Philippine Trading and Exchange Corp. (PSEi), and the stock market index and how it is computed at the end of trading.

What the SEC's speakers became initially thought would be a boring session with students who had to comply with some procedural academic requirements turned out to be anything but that.

From the quality of the questions asked, it was apparent the students are intellectually prepared and would, in the future, be a credit to the accounting profession.

They do not fit into the caricature of "yuppies," as some Metro Manila students derisively call provincial residents who come to the metropolis for their education.

My brief experience with these students validated the perception held by many that students need not go to Metro Manila (and suffer the agonies of urban blight) to get quality education.

The results of recent government board exams, including the bar, show that graduates of provincial institutions of learning can go head to head with their counterparts in the so-called elite Metro Manila schools.

When good students are placed under the care of competent educators in a school with adequate learning facilities, the educational result is academic excellence.

Teodoro, please take a bow!

(For feedback, please write to rjsfudalan@inquirer.com.ph)

PAL buying 9 planes for inter-island operations

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES IS ACQUIRing up to nine turbo-propeller aircraft to serve its provincial-island operations, a major move by the flag carrier aimed at boosting trade, tourism and local economies in rural island communities.

Pilla talks: prop fleet will consist of three Q300 and six Q400 aircraft manufactured by Bombardier Aerospace of Canada, valued at $100 million based on list prices.

Deliveries of all nine turbo-prop jets expected within the next four to six months.

The aircraft will enable PAL to provide better service to passengers commuting between island points across the archipelago.

Pilla reasoned long into turbo-prop operations: enables it to expand its network to secondary points not currently served by jet aircraft, which can only operate to the larger provincial airports.

Philippine Stock Exchange
(As of April 10, 2008)
[stock market data tables]
Currencies
(April 10, 2008)
[currency exchange rate tables]

DOF looks into BOC collection shortfall

By Michelle V Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE WILL look more closely into the reasons behind the Bureau of Customs's collection shortfall in the first quarter.

The BOC collected P58.37 billion in the first quarter, short of the P61.75-billion target for the three-month period.

"The revenue collection performance of the Bureau of Customs has to be properly assessed in light of several macroeconomic indicators and not just the movement of the exchange rate," Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said in a statement.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales cited the strong peso as the main culprit behind the collection shortfall.

Morales said that were it not for some administrative measures that the BOC implemented, the strong peso would have limited the BOC's collection to just P46.3 billion in the first quarter.

The peso averaged at 40.8 against the US dollar in the first quarter, much stronger than the 44 assumed in the 2008 fiscal program.

The strong peso makes imported goods cheaper in local currency terms, thus pulling down collection of import duties and taxes.

Morales said that if compared with the BOC's performance in the first quarter last year, the latest collection actually marked a 23.7-percent increase from only P46.22 billion.

The DOF said, however, that while a strong peso has an adverse impact on Customs collection, higher oil prices and increase in imports should have made up for the strong peso.

The DOF noted the latest report by the National Statistics Office showing that imports grew 27.7 percent to $4.99 billion in January, much faster than the 9-percent increase for the full year.

The DOF also said crude oil prices were higher than expected.

According to estimates by the DOF, the BOC should have collected P200 million more than its P51.75-billion target in the first quarter if the net impact of the strong peso, higher oil prices and faster import growth was taken into account.

Rival AMWSLAI groups claim SC victory

By Dante L. Lucas

THE DISPUTE INVOLVING RIVAL BOARD factions of the P14-billion Air Material Wing Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AMWSLAI) may soon come to the interpretation of a recent Supreme Court ruling—which both sides claim support their case.

In a statement issued yesterday the incumbent faction of the country's second largest savings and loan association claimed that the high tribunal's decision had, in fact, "settled" the leadership squabble.

"This came after the SC's Third Division merely 'noted,' but did not act anymore on the urgent motion to annul the results of the AMWSLAI elections held last Jan. 16, 2008, where retired Col. Ricardo Nolasco Jr., along with seven others were installed as additional new directors of the AMWSLAI board," the Nolasco faction said.

How the Supreme Court's decision to interpret it—and who ends up sitting on the board of the company—will determine who manages the company, which holds the investments and savings of over 220,000 retired and active duty military and police personnel.

According to the Nolasco faction, the Supreme Court also granted and "noted" the motion for leave to admit the opposition to the plea to annul the elections filed by AMWSLAI directors Lorito Manoy Asuncion Mercado, Jesus Elmerito Antonio Doñoma, and reserve forces.

"Based on the Supreme Court's traditional practice, the 'noted' or 'to note' action done by the tribunal means that the court merely accepted the pleading filed and saw no necessity anymore in further acting on it," the statement said.

The group released the statement after its rival, led by retired police Col. Manoy and other "dissident group were 'defying' the Supreme Court's order to reinstate five board members that were barred from even entering the company's premises.

According to the Manoy faction, the Supreme Court came out with a unanimous decision last October 2007 invalidating the results of the October 2005 AMWSLAI election—which their group lost—because of alleged irregularities and procedural lapses on the part of AMWSLAI Comelec.

The Supreme Court decision ordered the reinstatement of the original board, which included Nolasco and Manoy, in a holdover capacity until elections could be held.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Department of Science and Technology

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)

Science Garden, Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1100

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

This PAGASA, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites registered PHILGEPS supplier/ manufacturer/ distributor/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project : Supply, Delivery, Installation, Supervision, Testing, and Commissioning of Radar equipment with factory & On-site Training for Supervision and Engineers' Familiarization

Location : Protection, Surigao del Sur

Qty/ Unit	Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract
1 Lot	**Supply, Delivery, Installation, Supervision, Testing, and Commissioning of Radar equipment with factory & On-site Training for Operators and Engineers' Familiarization** Price Validity: 120 calendar days Delivery Period: 4 months (Supplying, Supervision, Testing, Commissioning and Training: 45 months	P19,160,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening of bidders will be based on the submitted Class "A" Documents with the Technical/ Financial criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

	Activities	Schedule/ Time	Venue
1.	Advertisement/ Posting of IAEB	April 11, 2008	
2.	Issuance of Bid Doc	April 11-16, 2008 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	Physical Services Section, 2/F PAGASA Central Office, Bldg.
3.	Pre-bid Conference	April 16, 2008/ 8:00 a.m.	Meeting Conference Room, 2/F PAGASA Central Office, Bldg.
4.	Submission of Eligibility Requirements, Envelope I & II	April 30, 2008/ 8:00-9:00 a.m.	Physical Services Section, 2/F PAGASA Central Office, Bldg.
5.	Opening of Eligibility Req. & Envelope I	April 30, 2008/ 9:00 a.m.	Meeting Conference Room, 2/F PAGASA Central Office, Bldg.
6.	Opening of Bids – Envelope II	April 30, 2008 / 1:00 p.m.	
7.	Bid Evaluation & Post-qualification	May 2-9, 2008	
8.	Notice of Award	May 12, 2008	

Interested parties may avail Bid Requirements and Bidding Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee equivalent to P10,000.00 to the PAGASA Cashier upon presentation of this advertisement stating together with the Company's TIN.

The PAGASA reserves its responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) NATHANIEL T. SERRANO
Chairman, PAGASA-BAC

STI April 11, 2008

WOFEX VISAYAS 2008 CONDUCTS FREE SEMINARS ON FOOD & BEVERAGE THIS APRIL

Organized by Atlantic Events Plus Group Inc. and co-organized by the Philippine Association of Meat Processors (PAMP), Association of Food Industries, Manufacturers Exporters (AFIME) and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc. (Cebu EXCOP Cebu), the current and the second biggest F&B trade show in the country, the Wofex Visayas 2008 is an off-shoot of the biggest annual international food trade fair in the country, the WORLD FOOD EXPO (WOFEX) to be held on August 6 to 9, 2008 at the Cebu International Convention Center. Meanwhile, the Wofex Visayas 2008 is the only food trade show in the Visayas region, occupying the entire 1,000 square meters of the Mezzanine Floor of the Cebu International Convention Center. Both shows will co-exist this coming August 6 to 9, 2008 at the Cebu International Convention Center. Wofex Visayas 2008 is an off-shoot of the biggest annual international food trade fair in the country, the WORLD FOOD EXPO (WOFEX) to be held on August 6 to 9, 2008 at the Cebu International Convention Center. Meanwhile, the Wofex Visayas 2008 is the only food trade show in the Visayas region, occupying the entire 1,000 square meters of the Mezzanine Floor of the Cebu International Convention Center. Both shows will co-exist this coming August 6 to 9, 2008 at the Cebu International Convention Center. Wofex Visayas 2008 is an off-shoot of the biggest annual international food trade fair in the country, the WORLD FOOD EXPO (WOFEX) to be held on August 6 to 9, 2008 at the Cebu International Convention Center. Meanwhile, the Wofex Visayas 2008 is the only food trade show in the Visayas region, occupying the entire 1,000 square meters of the Mezzanine Floor of the Cebu International Convention Center. Both shows will co-exist this coming August 6 to 9, 2008 at the Cebu International Convention Center.

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
Securities and Exchange Commission
SEC Bldg., EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF THE REGISTRATION OF SECURITIES OF
SUN-THAI MINING & ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on 28 March 2008, a sworn statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on behalf of **SULTAN MINING & ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP.** for the registration of P1,414,000,000 worth of common shares which shall be sold at the par value of One Peso (P1.00) per share, broken down as follows:

Outstanding Capital Stock	782,156,940
Shares for Public Offering	282,000,000
Total No. of Shares to be listed	1,064,156,940

According to the papers presented, the following persons are the officers/ directors of the corporation:

Name	Position
Frederick T. Lu	Chairman & President/CEO
Rosalinda F. Lu	Director & Treasurer/COO
Rufino B. Rimando	Director
Maria Fatima D. A. Morales-Montemayor	Director & Corporate Secretary
Atty. Manuel C. Espinosa	Director
Lilian Hwang Yonaha	Independent Director
Lester T. Lu	Director
Rodolfo U. Viola	Independent Director
Carlo Alix L. Fernandez	Director

Said registration, replacement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours, and copies thereof may be obtained upon payment of reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

(Sgd.) **GUSTINA R. GALLARDON**
Director

PSE April 11, 2008

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
NOVA, Andanar Bldg., E. Rizal Avenue, Calamba City
Telefax No. (049) 545-0552

April 11, 2008

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following completed employment forms filed with this Regional Office, applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1. **EPCON PHILIPPINES (INGLESIDE), INC.** CDP 1 Bo. Mendez, Cahupan, Lipa City	**Mr. Hitaru Obinata** **Japanese**	QA Production Engineering Section Manager
2. **MIRCOR TECHNOLOGY PHILIPPINES, INC.** Lopez Technopark, Binan, Laguna	**Mr. Ju Yeol Kim** **Korean**	Senior Director, Procurement & Logistics
3. **MIRCOR TECHNOLOGY PHILIPPINES, INC.** Lopez Technopark, Binan, Laguna	**Mr. Jae Woo Kim** **Korean**	Senior Vice President, PT Operations
4. **CRONICS, INC.** CPP Brgy. Batino, Calamba City	**Mr. Kyunghee Lee** **Korean**	E.A.I Production Manager
5. **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY PHILIPPINES, INC.** Phase III-1, San Jose Village, Binan, Laguna	**Mr. Nestor Onesoke** **Japanese**	Senior Engineer – Manager (I-T) Division

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, JR., CESO III
Regional Director

STAR April 11, 2008

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Regional Office No. V
Legazpi City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SUPPLY OF 6,522,500 PIECES 1-KILO TIED-BOX OF PLASTIC CONTAINER FOR REPACKING PURPOSES OF NFA RICE

The National Food Authority Region V invites all plastic container manufacturers/ suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of 6,152,380 pieces of 1-kilogram & 2-kilogram plastic container with the following specifications:

Lot	Volume	Specification	Pick-up Location/ Price	Approved Budget of the Contract	Source of Fund
Lot I	4,695,880	8.4"x5.5"x1.5"x.35mm	₱ 0.20	₱1,222,000.00	Corp. Ops. Budget
Lot II	1,457,500	8"x5"x1.5"x.35mm	₱ 0.21	₱1,152,425.00	do
Total	6,152,880			₱ 1,154,28 0.00	

The prospective bidders should have an experience in having completed within the last five (5) years of Single Contract that is similar to the contract to be bid, and should submit post-qualification requirements. The Invitation to Bid and Bidding Documents prospective bidder must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the Approved Budget for the contract (ABC) if the project to be bid.

On or like of the above, prospective bidders should have completed at least three similar contracts and the aggregate contract amounts should be equivalent to at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC for the project to be bid. Provided, that the largest of these similar contracts must also be equivalent to at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC of the project to be bid. Provided further that the foreign-owned firms or the prospective bidder has been in existence for at least three (3) consecutive years prior to publication of the IB/BE.

Prospective bidders must also have at least a number of two of the above or all of the job orders to could be eligible.

The eligibility check/ screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The bidding will be conducted in the NFA conference room, Andaluz Bldg. Regional Office, Rizal Ave., Legazpi City on the following schedule of activities:

Activities	Date / Time
1. Issuance of Bid documents	April 14-16 , 2008 8:00AM-5:00PM
2. Pre-bidding Conference	April 16, 2008 – 1:00 PM
3. Submission of Bid Documents/ Opening of Bids	April 30, 2008 – 10:00 AM

A complete set of Bidding documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from National Food Authority, Region V, Rizal Ave., Legazpi City upon payment to the NFA Cashier of non-refundable bidding fee in the amount of Php 1,000.00 per lot. The mode of payment shall be in cash. The Bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

All bids must be accompanied by Bid Security in the form and in the amount as indicated in the bid documents. Late bids shall not be accepted.

For further inquiries/details you may contact BAC Secretariat at Telephone numbers (052) 480-2150 and (052) 480-1550.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR INFORMALITIES THEREIN AND ACCEPT THE BID DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND ADVANTAGEOUS TO NFA, THE DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE IS FINAL AND BINDING.

(Sgd.) **JOSE S. SOLIVEN**
BAC Chairman

PSE April 11, 2008

The smell of success is in the air.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2008 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B7

BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

C2's saga in Vietnam

Successes and failures of RP's tea drink in a former communist state

By Roger Pe
Correspondent

AMONG THE MÉLANGE OF global brands that are already part of the economic boom happening in Vietnam are three very familiar ones to Filipinos: San Miguel Beer, Philippine Airlines and Jollibee.

The first two had for many years established a foothold in the country once dreaded by non-competing against foreign brands to a market almost identical to the Philippines' 87 million people. The last one is making earlier of attempts to introduce a noodle-eating nation to Pinoy burger.

Another Philippine brand is joining the ranks and is getting wide acceptance from a market used to drinking tea for civilizations—Universal Robina Corp.'s C2.

C2 invasion

After failed attempts to launch and relaunch a brand already various off as "dessert drink," C2's success story is a marketing miracle worth sharing.

Barged up by C2's success story in the Philippines, John Gokongwei, chair emeritus of URC, handled a new and modern production line in Vietnam in 2005. Rapid distribution ensued, a TV commercial was produced. But sales were below expectations.

A second TV commercial was aired but while it was better than the original, it remained largely ineffective, failing to generate brand awareness and induce product trial.

C2 BY URC, in picked at 3,000 dong per bottle (top right) Vietnam C2 tea drink endorser, Hollywood actor Johnny Tri Nguyen

The local and regional URC teams were already skeptical and asked to skip the production line back to Cebu. But URC president and CEO Lance Gokongwei was undeterred and instead, hired a regional marketing consultant to take over her outing with the hot after two "strikes."

Willy Ayella, the consultant, applied the first and foremost rule to marketing—go back to the consumers. In C2's case, to the Vietnamese consumers. He found out why the ad campaign didn't work: the flavors did not suit local taste and the packaging lacked presence.

He and his team set out to reformulate the product, redesign the packaging and relaunch the failed ad campaign.

Instead of firing the ad agency, Ayella enjoined the staff to redeem themselves with a new advertising to revitalize C2. The agency's CEO agreed to do it at half the price.

In the new TV commercial, C2 established a frame of reference—carbonated soft drinks, product that is in high demand in Vietnam. To add spice as its entertainment

CONTINUED ON B12

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Taking online advertising to the next level

List of most popular categories are seasonal but real-estate has trumped buy & sell category

JAYJAY VIRAY, MDB's general manager

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

IT'S TAKING ONLINE ADVERTising to the next level, for free.

For over a year now, budding entrepreneurs and businesses have found a place in the Internet where they transact with each other and promote their businesses amid services without dwelling on a single centavo.

Through its classified multimedia ad posting capability, online advertising portal MDB has created a unique subset individuals, organizations or clubs offering and looking for various services meet and transact business.

"We wanted to support entrepreneurs whose businesses lack advertising budget or expertise," says Jayjay Viray, the company's general manager. "At the same time, we wanted to give internet users a forum that are not as common; they are often overlooked by people."

MDB's interactive system allows a user to register an account with just an e-mail address, which gives him or her access to post advertisements in the online portal with no charge. Once the account is created, the user automatically turns into an advertiser, allowing him to upload advertisements that include pictures, videos and/or sound clips.

"It's a complete advertising solution for any advertiser to reach their businesses to service' full potential in the most economical way," Viray says.

With some 400,000 visitors every month, Viray says almost everything is available in MDB—from pets to flowers for sale, to classified employment ads, to real estate and cars for rent. "There's just some thing for every one. Name it, we have it," she says.

But even contained a user offering a "erotic massage" with an accompanying advertisement that graphically describes how the activity goes. With so many users, getting bad ads are inevitable. A system that screens ads and clients to discourage, however, is in place. Users can also report offensive or vulgar ads directly to them. Once detected, these ads are immediately taken down, she says.

MDB is an offshoot of Jobs.ph, a Hong Kong-based recruitment firm launched in 1995. It is an Asia Pacific online entertainment portal with a regional network that covers 12 countries. MDB now has banks in seven countries including Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, China and the Philippines.

While MDB that came to the country in 2006 is then form, it was still in its infancy stage—gathering content and perfecting their operations. When every thing was in place, the portal was fully launched in June 2007 as in its current, it format.

Since then, Viray said MDB has gone far from where they have started. When they began operations two years ago, they were only registering 30,000 unique visitors per month. But that number has grown more than 250,000 today.

"Our company's effective use of the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) process definitely helped the online portal gain more traffic," says Edmund Zulueta, MDB's business development manager.

Being SEO-friendly means ads posted in MDB rank high on search engine's results. Take for example a person from Laguna looking for a boarding house or studio in the country. He types the keywords "house rental in/at" in Google and will goes to the first page search results ads posted in MDB.

That's important because the higher rank a name has in the search results list, the higher the chance for people giving it a click, Zulueta says.

"There's nothing illegal there. It's all based on our research and how we take advantage of technology to work to our benefit which, in turn, keeps people coming to our users so well," he says.

"What's good about our site is we are open to changes. We are very dynamic," Viray says, adding they were mapped developing new features to make browsing the portal more pleasurable for the users. One of the recent progresses they created is to list those related searches in the bottom part of the screen whenever some one searches for a certain service or product.

They have also added message boards and live where users can "talk" to each other by posting messages and then replying to them. This allows them to exchange comments and opinions about certain goods, Viray says.

MDB makes posting ads easier with predefined categories which customers are already familiar with such as travel and leisure, homes and interiors, performing arts and business services.

With users as young as elementary students and as old as grandparents—all wishing to augment their incomes for varied reasons—Viray noticed the list of the most popular categories are seasonal. "In June, for instance, category becomes more popular; when it's December, Christmas-related categories shoot up."

For several, the real-estate segment has trumped the buy & sell category which included mobile phones for sale, as the most popular category.

Because posting advertisements is free, MDB makes money from companies which sponsor banner ads in the website. Users also have the option to pay a minimal amount to their ads because priority found. This means, their ads will be highlighted and will stand-out from the rest of the other ads.

Zulueta is quick to stress, however, that subscribing to priority listing is optional. Should users wish to stay posting free ads, all is good.

Though Viray says there are other companies that compete with one or two features of MDB, no one competitor has all the services offered by MDB. "Our mission to help provide Filipinos with better job opportunities remains our edge over the other companies," she says.

Viray says they have a customer service department that welcomes inquiries from users. For instance, who request help there means their own ads if they do not have their own graphic artist. Again, for free, she says.

They manage to be generous because they consider their projects as investments, she says. "Hopefully when we had helped entrepreneurs build up their companies, they would come back to us and buy banner ads or promote listings."

Fortunately for them, a "good percentage" of their free users do choose to get priority listings. Good enough to sustain their operations. Formally, our team doubled since we opened MDB. Now, we're planning to get more users for our subscribed," Viray says. They had just opened another office in Cebu on April 1.

There are challenges. One MDB team continues to face today. Viray says the low Internet and computer penetration in the Philippines remains one of the biggest difficulties they have. According to her, only 8 percent of Filipinos have access to computers.

The good thing about that, on the other hand, is that the potential for growth is really big," she says. "Once we come to MDB, which came from Jobs.ph, is sure set to become bigger than the latter."

There seems to be just to have at least a million unique users by the end of the year.

For more information, visit www.MDB.com.ph or call 914-8822.

Turn your food passion into a career

THE CENTER FOR CULINARY Arts, Manila recently introduced its Kitchen Discovery Class for anyone who ever considered turning his passion for food into a career. Promising endless life-changing possibilities after completion of the course, CCA offers aspiring culinarians, chef-wannabes or the simply curious a six-hour experience in a professional kitchen.

"It was Dr. John Kraipy, the president and founder of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Canada, and the University of the Philippines College of Home Economics that helped establish the CCA," shares Susana Pascual Guerrero, the president of the Greenpeg Group of Companies.

The birth of CCA was a milestone in the local culinary industry as it opened its doors to students who were not as financially privileged as those who can study abroad. After its establishment on August 26, 1996, CCA introduced the country's first licensed culinary education program, the Diploma in Culinary Arts and Technology Management (DCAM).

Each wannabe chef will greatly benefit from CCA's extensive and unequalled years of honing the country's culinary talents.

For P1,000 every Saturday, a budding chef will be immersed in three hours of cooking with TV chefs and CCA alumni Nino Laurena, Rosebud Benitez (of Q-11's Sa Dapat) or Tristan Encarnacion (UMA TV's Unang Hirit), and three hours of baking with equally prominent CCA instructors.

"It is a dream come true for me," says Encarnacion at the CCA launch at the Fraser Place Serviced Residences in Makati. "One of my goals is to teach. There have been so many culinary schools mushrooming around, but for CCA to train chefs, cooks and culinarians, we will discover the passion that's inside them."

Because the class are limited, each student will be accorded special care and attention. Each student will also be given a certificate of completion, a graduation for all learned recipes, lessons and recipe handouts, and one CCA apron, T-shirt, chalktop and side towel.

The CCA boasts of having the most recognizable and respected chefs teaching in the land in their city today.

"When one of our students, Michiko Suzuki, competed in a food contest in Singapore, she already had offers to work there. Now she is the executive chef at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza," Guerrero says.

By reaching potential hands-on education and equipping students with industry-required and world-class skills, CCA has produced chef-entrepreneurs such as Miguel Alba of Alba Restaurant, and Nikki Nicolas of Francesca's Cafe. Joe Trias and Red Gritz, corporate chefs like Jessica Limcolico and Nicole Ho of Unilever Foodsolutions; and soon chefs Christopher Regis of Liberty Grill at the US Embassy in Manila and Janice Lumaga of Mandaluyong Palace.

For inquiries call 812-9922/523-9812/526-0 or check the interactive web site www.ccamanila.com.

THE CLASS is for anyone who considers turning his passion for food into a career

QUERUBIO

C2's saga in Vietnam

From page B/4

cedar, it also featured a Hot spice beverage that consisted—Johnny Dr. Nguyen, a young Hollywood actor and director. Cool, good for the skin, and a diuretic. Even in most men, Tet Nguyen endorsed. led the ideal C2 endorsers.

The Tet spot leveraged on a very young young of older, since—C2 flavor tea leaves grown in the northern highlands of "That Nguyen" consumed on the occasion of the lunar tea in Vietnam. Brand registration was strengthened by spelling out the words "God and Clean" to English and Vietnamese. Both physical and emotional benefits were exploited on the ball, and a price reduction limited trial offer was announced.

Aside believes that "good advertising need not be expensive—they must be creative and effective."

Like TVC helped rejuvenate a failed new product launch that had already been relaunched. Sales jumped three-fold immediately after airing. In November 2006, thereafter advertisers voted the spot as among the Top 10 "Most Favorite TV Commercials." Suffice it to say the campaign had remained top of mind. It's a clever demand from the male, including improved availability and compressed gaps in distribution.

Prior to this amazing success, the team did not forget to use glasser brand visibility. The big difficulty for all the advertisement of TV production and media were only half of the old campaign.

Then, "the new TVC to introducing C2 for the dotel since, consumer and media comments like a has hitting a half out of the park for a homeruns, despite two earlier strikes," Aiello proudly exclaims.

"I can't get into the exact values of C2 sales in Vietnam for competitive reasons, but clearly it has been a very successful launch for LBC. The main reason for C2's success was primarily the product was reformulated to more Philippine-type flavors like lemon and apple versus the original preparation of lemon and jasmine. Also, our Vietnam team made major improvements to our distribution and pricing structure over the last six months. I wouldn't say it was just because of advertising—the whole mix of advertising, distribution, pricing and product attributes such as taste and health benefits of tea have been accepted by the Vietnamese consumer, just as they have been by the Philippine consumer," says Gobongsod of the success of C2.

When it comes to prices and it looks as if C2 is here to stay. To date, C2's sales have grown to the point where the previous sales volume per month has become the sales volume per day representing a 5,000 percent increase in sales after over a year. To this day, C2 is set to conquer another — Asian market—Malaysia.

What's new in the ad world?

JE DAMOS, JOINT CEO OF Unicom Bank with Bebot Pop, announces the Unicom Bank's MY Love Sh@bka presentation was the reason of all sales a three-way agency pitch held last March 26, 2008. The country's biggest local ad-agency battled it out solely to confront Leon Worldwide and Gano (Gallardo and Associates) and won the business.

It's a loan harvest for the Philippines this year as only Leave Worldwide Philippines made it to the shortlist of 2,000 selection of Once Blows, three of the world's toughest award competitions. Leon's "Blues and Stones," a single entry for newspaper full spread or centerspread category won it. The ad was created for Unilever Asia. The winners will be announced in May.

Brand name advertising

A Malaysian toothpaste brand is bugging the local

AD BUZZ

Pinoy brands in Asia

Enlisted Whitening Lotion is present in Cambodia (Khmer, the muscle-conquers), also pioneered in Vietnam, where a big billboard stands in this day right across for Chi Minh's rambunctious tourist magnet—Ben Thian Market. A certain brand is also present in Kuala Lumpur's neighborhood of important bars.

Million Bloom, Mandee and RDL conquer Myanmar and Laos? That is not for sissies). Roger Po, Contributor

Young guys put up IT firm, give job to students

By Marlene Cece
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCBAN, LAGUNA—IT ALL started in 2001 when most provincemates Pempengco's then soaked-Irish graduates Dan Cedric Imbuna to create an ordering and inventory system for the company.

After finishing the project, others in jobs started coming in. Today, Imbuna is running an information technology (IT) firm, outsourcing software systems and other services to clients locally and internationally.

Lasertim Systems is a product of six forgotten young men—Imbuna, Ariel Bautista, Mark Ellchad, Glenn Martinez, Fernando Aplim and Hayani Lara—from the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

"Some of us were classmates in Gawad (computer science) subjects," Bautista recalls. "They asked me if I wanted to earn extra so I said yes."

For several years, the students worked on projects as a freelance basis to between classes or as take-home assignments. But with projects piling up, they saw the need to formally establish a company. They pitched in their savings and savings to put up Lasertim Systems in January last year.

From an office apartment here and a small office space rented in Quezon City, the group opened a main office in Manila and a branch in General Santos City.

"This is as far the best investment I've had," says Bautista, who found himself running an established firm at the age of 23. Lasertim Systems has 30 software developers, computed mostly of students taking their practicums.

Partnerships

Imbuna, the chief executive officer, travels abroad to market the company and meet clients in the United States, Europe, Singapore and Japan. His colleagues attend to online bidding offered by companies looking for outsourcing services.

Among the customized software programs Lasertim Systems has created are the Brain Boiler 2, an application that flashes text on the computer screen; and the itis, a management system that allows simultaneous viewing of multiple terminals.

It has also enhanced a hockey and filing systems called the automated backup suite for ABP Solutions, an Internet hosting company based in Switzerland; and designed information kiosks for an outdoor retail mall in Missouri, USA. It took it to animated software designed to dispense free information through a touch screen device usually used in malls or groceries.

In the Philippines, Lasertim Systems has kept its partnership with Pempengco's Bevi, providing the latter an automated inventory accounting system and a fingerprint identification software.

It also created a tracking and market information system for Fresenius Medical Care, a Philippine-based company offering dialysis machines.

Part-time work

As a way of paying back UP Lasertim Systems maintains its office in Los Baños to accommodate students who want to earn.

"Not only that students will have a part-time job but they will also be exposed to how real industry works," Bautista says. "This time, the pressure to finish a job is not just that you will fail in class, but because you are being paid."

The company runs an apartment-style like campus that serves both as an office and a dormitory for the part-time students.

"We call it the developers' nook but since the students are living there, they refer to it as the Dev House," Bautista shares.

According to him, not all part-timers applied for the salary. Some are taking their practicum and are getting paid at the same time.

BELONGING to almost the same age group, employees of Lasertim Systems find fun at work.

He is also thankful to his former professors who encourage students to join the company for their practicum or as part-time employees.

A trainee is paid an hourly rate of P30.

He tries work according to his desired number of hours or depending on his class schedule. "We really ask for their class schedules so we would know their availability."

Having been a working student himself, Bautista believes that academics should remain as the top priority.

As much as possible, he says, the management does not delegate tasks to those who have exams or class requirements to submit.

The trainee may be promoted as a software developer and later on to designer position, depending on his performance.

"Meaning ng (in the company) does not require a certain period. It depends on his ability to learn fast and grow as a professional," Bautista explains.

Enhancing knowledge

He says the company is after the person's ability and not his bachelor's degree.

The large pool of the company's manpower is composed of Computer Science students in UPLB.

To General Santos, most of the employees and those taking their practicum took up IT courses from the Mindanao State University and ICL.

Since IT is a fast-developing trend, the company tries to cope with new technologies by doing research.

The company continues to live by its corporate value of "untiring, the human potential" by drawing out a person's ability and further enriching it.

Marketing RX: Merchandising displays ...

From page B1-1

in-store promotional cost that consumers are actually grateful for their role in facilitating their need to quickly choose and decide.

Force 2. Time pressure. The second factor responsible for consumers agreeing in effect to the consumer-driving tactics behind the merchandise displays is time pressure. In-store consumer behavior studies tell us that even the "leisurely" shopper is time conscious. There was so much she already did before coming to the supermarket and she knows there's still so much to do after shopping. There must be a way to complete everything she intended to do in store. She's therefore only thankful to get themselves aids and algorithms from the supermarket and its supplier—even in just the form of a suggestive display.

Force 3. Options. The third force favoring market-driven influence on consumer behavior is the variety of options that each of the display tactics opens to the shopper. In the display by brand, this stimulus trigger is the consumer's mind remembering like this: "My goodness, I didn't even that Sonyo has so many fruit juice flavors! Let me see if this, this and this flavor are nice." In the color band, a similar option-widening response comes from the other stimulus display by flavor: "Hey, I didn't know the cherry flavor has that many brands and that the mango flavor has even more brands. Let me try those other brands for each flavor." The stimulus-response flow has reversed in direction. In this consumer-driving set-up, the stimulus came from the supermarket or its supplier inviting shopper response. In the consumer-driven world, the stimulus is the consumer's sense and need. Then it's the producing company, the supermarket supplier, who will respond with the product appropriate to the discovered consumer need.

As you can see, when it comes to marketing tactics and given the shopping conditions of low product involvement, time pressure and quick consumer opinion, the marketer-driven or consumer-driving mindset is more effective at getting sales results. And in the case of your question about the merchandising of your fresh meat, it can even expand the category number. So let's see how that can be true.

We'll continue with the second part next week!

Send questions to Marketing@phildaily.net. God bless!

B2 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER FRIDAY APRIL 11, 2008

BUSINESS Friday

Celebrating Italy's Masterpieces

Tribute to Tuscan Art Rises at McKinley Hill

MERCADERIO

VILLE: 815-1888 | 816-2768 | 816-3517

Merchandising displays and in-store shopping decision process - 1

Q: WE'RE MARKETING RTD FRUIT juice drinks and also both processed and fresh meat. We're mainly in supermarkets. We just had a category management (CatMan) in-house seminar. We learned a lot although some of our more basic questions remained unanswered.

One of those unanswered basic questions concerned your column's idea about being consumer-driven in marketing decisions. When we were discussing in-store merchandising and display of RTD juice drinks, for example, our seminar facilitator recommended that "according to CatMan principles," we should be displaying by flavor. This is against our current practice of displaying by brand. So we asked what in-store consumer behavior would serve as the logical basis for his recommendation. His answer was to appeal to "the concept of CatMan." He said: "In CatMan, we're managing categories first, and brands second."

Then, he threw back the question at us asking what shopper behavior or decision process logically justifies our displaying by brands. How was his specific question: "Are you saying that shoppers, after they've decided to buy an RTD juice drink, decide first on the brand to buy and then what flavor rather than decide on the flavor first and then the brand?"

We had an unresolved debate: In our corner, we were arguing in favor of our version of the consumer decision sequence (taking place while in the store); our facilitator was just as staunchly upholding his own assumed consumer in-store response sequencing.

For the merchandising of our meat products especially the fresh meat, we had a similar unresolved back-and-forth argument and counter-argument. Our facilitator recommended that the supermarket meat section should be arranged by meat preparation "recipe" like "for roast beef," "for crispy pata," and the like. Of course, this is outside of what we're used to: which is a meat display by animal to its part, chicken and beef, and then by cut. The same issue of the true underlying consumer purchase preference and decision process was raised and resolved inconclusively.

Will you help us find a reasonable resolution?

A: Thanks for the very juicy and meaty question. While it's true that we've strongly argued in favor of being consumer driven in most of your marketing decisions, we also pointed out that in other scenarios, being consumer-driving incoherent is the one

driving the customers and not driven by her, for listening to her) or marketer-driven is the more applicable and suitable approach. We specifically pointed you to when and the suitable plane market where the marketer-driven, consumer-driving premise prevails.

But before we jump into making any immediate marketing fixes, why don't we first diagnose each of your two reasoning and proposed specific scenarios. The first relates to the issue of displaying RTD juice drinks by brand versus by flavor.

Brand or flavor?

It's interesting that you mentioned that you're prone more to displaying by brand. That means you're primarily in-store sales or shopper purchases with that display tactic. Your seminar facilitator is of course so committed to store marketing. So it's safe to say that he too must have gotten his clients sales and shopper purchases with the tactic of displaying by flavor. This means that both of you are right or at least half right.

So let's search and diagnose for the other half in your store and that of your facilitator's. We can do this by asking what kind of sales or consumer purchase behavior was generated by each display tactic. Then we follow up with the question: What is the difference between the sales patterns or shopper purchase patterns from these two tactics?

When the supermarket displays by brand, the RTD juice drinks supplied to them and then by the flavors under each brand, what is this telling the shopping consumer? Here's that approximate shelf script: "Hey Mrs. Shopper, why don't you buy this brand for the difference in flavors you're looking for?" So the usual effect of such a display on the shopper is to get her to think first about brands and then decide which flavor or flavors she wants. When she follows this line of thinking, it drives her to buy the same RTD juice brand for 1, 2 or 3 or more flavors in any one store visit.

What about when the supermarket displays by flavor and then by the different brands under each flavor? What the supermarket is telling the consumer to do is to first think of the flavor she likes and then to choose a brand or two under the preferred flavor category. When the shopper does as she is told under this scenario, she gets predisposed to buying different brands belonging to her chosen flavor.

It's clear from the foregoing likely consumer responses that what the consumer does not gets to want to condition driven. It's what we have already previously referred to as a case of consumer driving.

Three forces

But why would the consumer behave as the marketer, that is, in the supermarket sells her to behave? Consumer psychologists tell us that there are at least three forces at work.

Force 1: Consumer involvement. The first of these is the level of consumer's felt involvement with the product being bought. For awkwardly bought supermarket items, purchases has shown us that the typical case is a low involvement level.

For low involvement products, the consumer applies her coping mechanism of relationship and mind shortcut and heuristics. It's what Malcolm Gladwell calls "blinking," or instant cognition, instant decision-making. Such instant decision-making requires "thin slicing, ... the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in circumstances and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience." In the supermarket setting, these thin slices are mostly

MARKETING Rx B2-4

FOUNDATION founder-directors Lorna Perejo Kapunan (left) and Maria Tarrosa (right) with Lourdes Montinola

Makeup purchase helps women's causes

By Cinelle V. Plaza

TRUE BEAUTY ISN'T IN A TUBE of lipstick.

But, as lawyer Lorna Perejo Kapunan put it in her speech at the Human's Emotion Foundation's third anniversary and International Women's Month celebrations at Rustan's Makati last week of March, buying makeup has been helping fund causes of Filipino women.

Kapunan, a lawyer who heads the foundation's Advocacy Committee, explained how P1 from every P500 purchase at Rustan's Emotion has helped fund the printing of 10,000 copies of a primer on women's rights.

The primer is in English, Filipino, Hiligaynon, and a new Filipino-Iloko version, distributed free across the country to help empower women through information. (A copy can be had upon request, with or without purchase, at Emotion branches.)

The anniversary celebration also had a wrenching campaign of Isa Lorenzo's award-winning photo exhibit at the Makati store's Heaven on the 10th. Called "Filipinas," the exhibit had a book of intimate portraits of 35 formidable women, achievers in their fields.

Lorenzo, a doctor, heads Saronno Foundation's Health and Wealth committee.

The exhibit, curated by Rustan Diaga-Barro, debuted in January 2006 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Last year, it traveled to the Maison Heaven in Paris, then to the Philippine embassy in Belgium.

In June, "Filipinas" will be shown in Sweden. Since Lorenzo began photographing these women in 2003, three of the subjects have since passed away, among them lawyer Haydee Yorac.

The event was attended by some of Lorenzo's subjects: poet Virginia Moreno; diplomat Benjito Mainit; anti-crime crusader Teresita Ang-See, columnist Lourdes R. Montinola and Justice Amanthia M. Sereno.

"Filipinas" the book is printed accordion-type, with the portraits on one side and the women's respective biographies on the back. This was because, Lorenzo said, she had young readers in mind "who like big pictures" and who could be inspired by these women achievers.

The book sells for P1,500 (at Fully Booked, Power Books, Silverlens Gallery, and Rustan's Heaven on the Fifth and Glorietta Ovest), P500 of which goes to the Kanlaon Foundation.

The foundation, explained trustee Nina Tinsioco, is "consumer-driven" and focuses on women empowerment and wellness.

Its projects include providing full-dress treatments and pampering workshops for cancer patients; book donations; printing of the Magna Carta for Teachers; salary grants for six members of Bahay Philippines; micro-financing livelihood projects for the poor; outfit for malnourished children, among others.

Its project collaborators include Shanna Bedelles, I Can Serve Foundation, Au Bikke Bukol Foundation, Women Involved in Nation Building.

ISA LORENZO'S photo exhibit featuring portraits of 35 formidable Filipinas

A baby, 2 artists and a 'baby whisperer'

By Toni Villaraza Gregory
Contributor

A Pablo's woman at pearl floral earrings adorns Tamara's headband.

PICTURE THIS: A MESTIZA BABY wrapped down in her nappies. A "baby handler" playing the crucial role of a baby whisperer to ensure the baby behaves during the three-hour shoot.

A foremost photographer-artist focused on lighting and setting. A young mom standing by for her cue. Production crew thinking the shy for retro-levels which might dampen the day. And a designer-jeweler having

A MAY CO

Soak Up the Sounds of Summer with Sony Ericsson

Sony Ericsson celebrates waves of fun in the sun with a whole range of funky new Walkman phones and a fun new promotion to get you grooving all summer long. From April 1 to May 31, every purchase of a Sony Ericsson Walkman phone gives you the chance to party all summer in Boracay, with VIP seats to every edition of the hottest series of summer concerts on this beach this season.

Five grand prize winners win a complete Boat Party Package – a South East Asian Airlines (SEAIR) Adventure Pass for two, letting you and a companion fly to any SEAIR destination as many times as you want for 45 days; a special three-day, two-night stay with breakfast for two in One MGM Boracay; and P25,000 pocket money. One MGM Boracay is a lush resort village with 100 elegantly appointed guest rooms and suites. The Party Package, meantime, enables winners to fly to Boracay for each party weekend to groove to the music of the most popular bands from Sony BMG. Five other winners also win roundtrip SEAIR tickets for two to Boracay.

That's not all for these lucky new Walkman phone owners. Sony Ericsson gets them front row and center at the biggest and hottest series of beach gigs in Boracay. Starting May 3, the brightest Sony BMG acts headline the Sony Ericsson Music Tripping concert series on Club Paraw.

Sony Ericsson Music Tripping blasts off with Callalily with a live performance of what promises to be this season's anthem, *Ito Na Ang Summer*. A catchy tune guaranteed to stay in Hitsville until school opens, the song is embedded along with Callalily wallpaper in Sony Ericsson W580i, W200i, W810i and W880i Walkman phones.

Boracay beach goers can also catch top Sony BMG acts like Pupil, Cueshe and Moonstar 88 in the succeeding editions of Sony Ericsson Music Tripping on May 17, May 31 and June 7, 2008 at Beachcomber. Forty-five nights away after each concert with body-shaking sounds from DJ Ace Ramos and DJ Regel Orosay. Lucky party goers also get to take home Sony Ericsson premium items.

Think you've got the summer heat beat? Not until you've got a new Walkman phone and game Sony Ericsson Music Tripping. Just buy a Sony Ericsson Walkman phone, fill out a raffle coupon with your complete name, address, contact number, signature, dealer name and sales staff name. Drop boxes are located at participating Sony Ericsson shops and dealers nationwide. Raffle draws will be held on April 25 and June 4, 2008.

Where you want to explore the Philippines and have a short time to do it, the airline to take is South East Asian Airlines (SEAIR), the Philippines' premiere leisure airline. SEAIR offers the Adventure Pass, your ticket to dream destinations across the country, all you can visit anytime within 45 days.

The SEAIR Adventure Pass is available at all SEAIR ticketing offices and SEAIR accredited travel agencies any time of the year. This special ticket entitles the bearer to an unlimited number of domestic flights on any SEAIR route. As an added privilege, a SEAIR Adventure Pass holder does not even fall in line for tickets. Just show up at the check-in counter two hours before your preferred flight, show your Adventure Pass and get a boarding pass. Seats are subject to space availability, and the pass is valid 45 days from the date of purchase.

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The SEAIR Adventure Pass lets you enjoy the white powder sands of Boracay one weekend, and the undiscovered frontiers of Palawan in the next. Boracay is now the country's top summer destination offering a variety of island activities. Whether you're into water sports or chilling by the beach with a cool drink, feasting on local and international cuisine, shopping for nifty souvenirs or partying until dawn, Boracay promises an unforgettable experience. Meanwhile, Palawan beckons with its lush, unspoiled natural beauty. A number of choice resorts lets you enjoy these islands to the fullest.

Let the SEAIR Adventure Pass take you through these tourist sites and more. SEAIR offers the fastest flight to Caticlan from Manila, with up to 28 flights daily during the summer season. The carrier also flies the most flights to Palawan, up to 48 flights per week and to the most number of destinations.

Headquartered in Clark Airfield, Pampanga, SEAIR is the country's second longest running airline. Explore the Philippines this summer, and have only one pass to see it all with the SEAIR Adventure Pass. Plus a visit to their new destinations: Baler, Aurora Province; Daet, Camarines Sur; and Tablas, Romblon.

For more information on the SEAIR Adventure Pass, call 848-0150 or visit www.flyseair.com.

Swing into Your Next Stop with the SEAIR Adventure Pass

Boracay Celebrates Longest Series of Concert Parties

It's the beach party concert series that will keep you coming to Boracay all summer long. Sony Ericsson has lined up the hottest acts from Sony BMG to headline Music Tripping, where you can enjoy your favorite bands jamming every weekend by the beach and get to know more about stunning new Sony Ericsson Walkman phones.

Music Tripping starts Saturday, May 3, 2008 at Club Paraw and opens with Callalily performing their smashing send-up to the season, "Ito Na Ang Summer" composed especially for Sony Ericsson Walkman phones. The pop tune heralds the coming of summer, when new pairs hold the lead vocals and cools off their owners. The song comes embedded in selected Walkman phones like the W200i, W580i, W660i, and W810i, along with Callalily wallpapers of pins taken by master lensman Jun de Leon. Fans get to see Kevin Cadiente on vocals, Ryan Ricafrente on bass, Tony Javierquez and Abbo Acosta on guitars, and Lemuel Belaro on drums, perform this and their other hits and onstage at the beach.

Callalily burst on the music scene with "Stars," a single from their debut album *Destination XYZ*. The hit launched them into Walkman music popularity as fans lapped up the album and Walkman phones with an acoustic version of the hit and Callalily wallpapers.

Taking the stage on May 17 at Beachcomber are lead singer Ely Buendia, guitarist Yan Yuzon, bassist Dino Bongco and drummer Wendell Garcia, collectively known as Pupil. The band brought everyone up, a mix of rock and roll classics, punk, new wave, glam rock and something more in between, to new listeners.

With "Set Me Apart," the new theme song of telecommercial cable company Animax out in their second album, Pupil proves that everyone is worth looking up the word for and partying.

On May 31, the multi-awarded pop-rock band from Cebu responsible for hits like "Stay" and "Usad" will take fans swooning Beachcomber in Boracay as the featured artist on Music Tripping. Cueshe, MYX Music Awardees for Favorite Artist, Favorite Group and Favorite Song ("Stay") and 2006 Band of the Year, takes center stage from Vocalist Jay Contreras, guitarist and vocalist Ruben Cabatbat, bassist Troy Laureaga, lead guitarist Jowee Marino, keyboardist Jhuvipe Diaodoa and drummer/band leader Mike Mendiola will serve up Cueshe hits.

And on June 7, headliners will get musical-ized with Moonstar 88. The band, composed of drummer Bob Sundsong, bassist Pierre Bernardo, guitarist Herbert Hernandez and vocalist/guitarist Raychelle Bang gave a fresh twist to APO's "Pinoypenguin" and Yano's "Senti." Fans waited three years for their third album, *Side Combo*, and were not disappointed with the results. Audiences at Beachcomber will want to hear their latest hits, "Selfsame" and "Migraine" from this album.

Sony Ericsson Music Tripping hits Boracay beach from May 3 – June 7, 2008, with additional music from renowned DJ Ace Ramos and DJ Regel Orosay.

Surf the Sound Waves with these Sizzling Walkman Phones

How to walk, talk – travel to the hottest spots this summer – while getting your fill of your favorite sounds? Your mobile lifestyle deserves the best of stylish multimedia mobile music phones from the Sony Ericsson Walkman range. These new Sony Ericsson Walkman phones are meant to rock you this summer – and the whole year round – while keeping you in touch with all that matters most.

Sony Ericsson W580

With its super slim, stylish design, massive 2GB music storage capacity and 3.2-megapixel camera, the W580 Walkman phone promises to hit the right notes with sophisticated music lovers and design connoisseurs alike.

The phone incorporates the WalkmanⓇ Player 3.0, the latest in WalkmanⓇ technology, plus you can select music to match your mood with SenseMe, a function that plots your playlist based on the song's tempo and style.

Music tracks can be organized by artist, album, or visually using album art, the album's front cover artwork. You can store about 1,800 songs or listen to the FM Radio.

The W580's HSDPA capabilities allow you to download at speeds up to four times faster than with regular 3G devices, and lets you view web pages quicker and easier. There's also a one-click access to the camera, and instant uploads to your personal online gallery, or blog.

Sony Ericsson W380

Music fans on the move will rejoice with this new Walkman clamshell boasting of seven-seen before features. Gesture control allows users to mute calls or snooze the alarm with a wave of their hands. The external display comes to life only when you need it, to show the name of a music track or to let you know who is calling.

Store hours of your favorite music on the W380's 512 MB Memory Stick Micro or tune in to your favorite FM station. Use the TrackID™ feature to tag a clip from the phone's radio (or any external sources) and find out instantly who sings it, what it's called and which album it's from.

The W380 WalkmanⓇ phone brings your music to the surface of the phone, allowing you to control what you're listening to without needing to open the phone. Step forward or backwards between tracks or pause the music effortlessly. One-touch buttons on the top of the phone light up when the WalkmanⓇ player is switched on and a hidden display comes to life, providing track information at a glance. Light effects can be used for different callers, making your phone's lights dance to match a song's beat.

Sony Ericsson W760

A 13-mm slim flip phone that lets you to control your music with the Walkman on Top design, the W550 offers a winning combination of ease of use, style and convenience. Key music functions including Play, Pause and Scroll are located outside the phone's flip cover, so you can use it easily like a regular MP3 player.

The W550 comes in trendy colors like Electric Black with orange accents, Hypnotic Black with purple accents, and a cool Ice Blue and Graphic White. Its smooth slim form makes the W550 a style statement on its own.

With TrackID, you'll always know what you're listening to with pleasure. To learn more about a tune, just record a few seconds of the song into the phone's microphone or from the built-in radio and use TrackID™ to identify it. The phone provides you with the name of the song, the artist, and even the album.

Sony Ericsson W910i awarded 2008 Best Handset

The Sony Ericsson W910i Walkman brought home the prize of Best Handset 2008 at the recently held 13th Global Mobile Awards of the GSM Association in Barcelona.

Designed as a sleek slider boasting of HSDPA technology, the W910i fuses mobile music, high-speed web access, 3D gaming, and video and still imaging into one total entertainment package in your hand. It is the first Walkman phone to feature SensMe, an application that lets you play music that matches your mood and arranges your playlist based on music style and tempo. The phone also features the innovative Shake control, where you flick the phone to control games or skip and shuffle between songs.

The W910i has room for over 850 songs with a 1GB Memory Stick Micro™ provided and comes in trendy Red or Metal Black. It's also got flash mode, a 3-megapixel camera with digital zoom, video calling, picture and video blogging, RSS feeds, a stopwatch and other good functions.

"We are very proud to receive such a prestigious award for what has proved to be a very popular product," says Dirk Hohndorf, Sony Ericsson President. "The W910i Walkman makes it quicker and easier to transfer or download music. It's about thinking beyond music, to games, videos and the Web."

Since the launch of the W800 Walkman phone in August 2005, Sony Ericsson has sold more than 57 million Walkman phones worldwide.

Rock the night away with the hottest bands on the following dates:
on May 3, on May 17, on May 31, and on June 1

SEAIR

MARTA Antonio and Tamara bond before the shoot.

A baby, 2 artists . . .

From page 11

cut award-winning pieces to be used for this rather intriguing baby shoot.

It was the pursuit for Johnson's Baby Soothing Naturals Lotion, a commemoration of five years someone was being developed for an exhibit called "Glow, Baby Glow"—photographs of glowing baby skin enhanced by custom jewelry.

The subject, 11-month-old Tamara, daughter of Marta Antonia, was chosen as exclusive of the baby skin Moisturizing Collection, which is made with olive-leaf extract and vitamin E to make skin glow like those gems that jewelers Candy Dizon picked out for the shoot.

Denise Weldon, herself a mom to two tots, gladly accepted the assignment even though a baby subject is normally a trying challenge even for the most seasoned photographers.

Johnson's foresight in to baby

TWINKLE Int. Diamond-studded ring slips snugly into Tamara's ring ear.

fancifier Lolen Whittaker.

The baby fancifier is like a home schlepperer; throw in probably just one or two in the whole coronary suit's data drill.

Whenever Tamara got fidgety, Lolen would pull out a colorful plastic toy from her bag of tricks and wave it in front of Tamara. Her giggled, and Weldon took the shot.

Weldon described the challenge: "I had to marry the elements: the baby skin, the mother's supporting presence and the jewelry which provided the magical effect on Tamara's body.

I was playing on the viewer's perspective as an adult who has not lost his imagination. The excellent team I worked with was in synergy with the flow of ideas. The more thinking on our feet, Candy Dizon's selected pieces started to play various 'roles.'"

Some ended up as headpieces. A diamond ring became a toe ring, a necklace fell beautifully behind Tamara's nipple buds, a bejeweled cuff slipped nicely into her arm, and a floral choker landed on her bottom—giving the illusion of a pretty tummy.

DENISE Weldon plays with her darling subject during the prima launch.

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Beauty Queen,
Actress, TV Host

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FASHION

FILIPINOS can once again have Kiton suits made to their exact measurements and specifications by Ermenegildo Zegna.

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
LIFESTYLE
Contributing Editors Apples Morales-Sadhwani and Jenni Epperson

Zegna brings made-to-measure service back in Manila

Luxury menswear brand strengthens presence in the country

By Chechi V. Moral

THROUGH SOME OF SIGHTS, Ermenegildo Zegna has filled all slots for its one-day-only Made To Measure session on April 23 in its just-executed store at Rustan's Makati.

This is apparently a proof of the luxury menswear brand's appeal to Filipinos, a market that's characterized by Zegna managing director Alessandro Mainolfo as "well-traveled and sophisticated, which may demand the kind of service they can get in Hong Kong or London."

The Made To Measure service is being re-launched to the Philippines as Rustan Specialties Inc. makes plans to open a freestanding Zegna...

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Putting together a cool summer look

Banker Jojo Marquez-Ocampo stylishly shuffles between office and home

Text by Rina Silayan-Go
Contributor
Photos by Jon Guiao
Portraits

WE DO TRIBUTE here to women who exude style, not only because they manage to pull together a distinct look that represents a fashion statement, but also because, more important, they go beyond aesthetics and lead fulfilling and accomplished lives.

The complexity of their days involves juggling responsibilities in the home and on the job, while pursuing their interests. They make full use of their time yet seldom neglecting life's essentials. They have class.

One such woman is Jojo Marquez-Ocampo, a bank's senior vice president. She's a magna cum laude graduate of the business management program of the Ateneo de Manila University.

A 10-hour workday for her covers marketing, sales, and business development duties. Because the silo door field work, visiting bank branches in the city and provinces, she's free to dress less typically than most bankers. Otherwise, meetings with senior officers dictate the more tapered suit. Clothes for client events after work are also factored into her wardrobe.

In the evenings, at home, she dials her business persona and becomes wife to Louie, the well-known composer and music director, and mom to Heirloom, Rubber, Isabelle, and Quito. Her clock at home greets her with more paperwork—this time household or school-related. She ever careful to prioritize family. She relegates these to her boss, and instead relishes over dinner with Louie and the kids.

Weekends are usually spent doing whatever is in season with the family and extended family—going out of town, to the beach, watching movies or concerts, or simply hiking around the village. Lately her weekends have been around kids' activities, due to rebuilding her new role as a baseball mom.

For some "me" time, Jojo goes to the gym twice a week, while waiting for her two teenage daughters to finish ballet lessons. This is one way she keeps healthy and "de-stresses."

After a workout require allow a busy day to having dinner and drinks with friends, where she can forget the worries and demands of her job and delight in the laughter and camaraderie of old friends.

The author is a fashion retailer and graduate of the New York Fashion Institute of Technology

Start casual

Pep up your feminine side with ruffles and frills. A knee-length pinch skirt that can be easily matched with any top—including jackets—is a wardrobe must-have.

Dress: cream-ruffled blouse, Mumbruno
Black high-waist pencil cut skirt, New Wave
Mesh pump, same

Business ending

Pair a short-sleeved trench coat in sunshine yellow with summery white shorts for a great weekend look. Wear it to brunch with the family or a day in the mall with your girlfriends.

Textured Cole yellow short-sleeved trench, Baby Phat
White shorts, Mike Perez
Yellow pointed shoes, all Paris Madrid's

Dress me pretty

Spice up a basic look with bright colors. A neutral piece such as khaki trousers can look fresh with a vibrant top.

Textured yellow Tencel sleeveless top, Cara Sage-Andra. Flower-accented pumps, Andy Fisher. Wear over pastel shorts

Transition to Friday's

Depending on your company's dress code, match your jacket with long shorts and a trendy wide belt for casual Fridays.

Multicolor stripe jacket with pastel tube from Bumpits. Textured black wrap shorts, available at Rustan's, Robinson's Place, Gateway, SM department stores and Hypermall

Eight young designers show what they've got

A little more editing and fine-tuning will help

Photos by Jon Guiao Fonacier
and Alex von Kaplan

SAMSUNG METROWEAR HAS become a leading platform for local designers to showcase their work.

Conceptualized and brought to life by Inquirer Lifestyle editor Thelma San Juan and mentored by Metro Editor-in-Chief Michele Gurrea Cohen, individually has also left the Metro 655-CHA Publishing family's Metrowear has showcased the collections of some of the country's most sought after designers like Cary Santiago, Rhett Eala, Inno Sotelo Ascenio, Randy Ortiz, and Jojo Uleven.

For its 2008 opening salvo, featuring Metrowear featured the works of all eight members of the Young Designers' Guild of the Philippines, plus self-confessed fashion chess-ol in shame.

Held at Manila Peninsula and directed by top director Jackie C. Aquino, the show did not have an overall theme but relied on each individual designer's creative force.

It opened with a presentation of Gino Manzanal's jewelry. Understandably, there was hardly any issues between the show of watch breaking sponsors' products and the designer's solution. As a result, the photographers were unable to take photographs of Manzanal's jewelry. And we hardly noticed them, too.

Perhaps a fashion show is not the best way to preview a jewelry collection? Maybe an exhibit where guests could view and even touch the pieces would have done Manzanal's work more justice.

Next up were soft collections of SDG alums Joey Samson, bracelet Dong Orange Diaz and Rachaki Aseres. Samson showed modern, even avant-garde tailored pieces in summer hues like powder blue, peach and pale pink in the form of a long, curvy voile top. Omega-Diaz countered with black shorts and a gown that had still curves and a fishtail hem in accents. His pieces were offset by cobalt blue and red accessories that looked brilliant against black.

The crowd pleaser, however, was Aseres, who showed three dresses in soft, feminine hues like blush, nude and the palest of pink. The designer used a crinkly thin taffeta that he formed into bands, which he artfully draped and positioned to form his dreamy-looking confections.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Inspired by Aseres

Due to Aseres's strong design identity and success in the business, younger designers continue to show inspiration from his work. For several seasons now, designers have flaunted cut pieces that seemed to be spin-offs of Aseres's work.

This show was no different, as TDG members Fredi Abasel and Brian Leyva presented what looked like Aseres-inspired pieces.

Abasel created art-inspired dresses in jersey and Shantung that featured cutouts upon cutouts joined together by buttons. The cutouts were reminiscent of Aseres's earlier collections, although the jersey pieces were distinctive.

Abasel's use of bright colors such as cobalt and carrot, mixed with neutrals like nude and bone and metallics like silver, was commendable and a much welcome departure from neutral tones that now dominate the runways.

A single brown pleated backless gown seemed out of place, though. On its own, the gown looked awesome, stylish, but it simply didn't complement any of the other pieces in his collection.

Leyva also presented pieces with cutouts and panels as design details. A lot of work obviously went into his creations, as some of his embroideries seemed like tattoos.

Leyva's choice of color (was that maroon and mocha?) was on the dull side, and his use of the bubble skirt was nothing new and inventive. But his black pieces peppered with "tentacle-like" textured protruding at the top.

CROWD favorite and designer inspiration Inchuki Aseres showed pretty dresses at this coffee in the school of hers.

Grap master

Gray and silver were the colors of choice for a couple of designers. John Herrera showed minimalist ensembles in gray neutral and leather grap. His collection offered skinny jeans and pants, vests, shift dresses and relaxed hooded and long-sleeved tops.

For a change, Herrera veered away from his usual fabric treatments. Gone for very much and fabric-esque-like details and a finale gown that looked like a Russian coat with full on funky drapes, everything was clean and straightforward.

The only element that jarred the simplicity of his collection was the leotard pattern he used as accents to some of the pieces. His choice of fish looked too crafty, wrinkly and Christmas-y for the ultra-modern collection.

Mimi Quilendrino also presented dresses in gray jersey, black and a not so flattering blend of yellow that simply did not do anything for the models' skin tones. Her ensembles were classy mixes of minimalist dress and heirloom slippers...supposedly an extension of a distressed gray/white.

Too much gimmickry took focus away from the clothes, which should always be the star.

Avis Paris for her shows this fall, however, love her blue Jacobs-inspired asymmetrical dress over a yellow bust and her black pleated finale dress with yellow tulle accent.

Emily and Gloria's pleats showcased Prime Mimi's selection of vintage, yellow and brown corsages, dress and pants that looked like loungewear and baby-doll nightie. The tufted touches were like afterthoughts in some of the pieces, but the orange cabas worn by model Joni Ringrid was the collection's saving grace.

Black and white

Finally, Patty Bautista showed a predominantly white collection that was in direct contrast to Louis Claparols' mostly black ones. Both designers used overlays of sheer fabric in some of their pieces. But while Bautista's were dreamy and whimsical, Claparols' were all-out glam.

Bautista definitely had the most cohesive collection in the whole group. She was able to make the oversized bubble skirt look fresh and different, and managed to present various incarnations of the little white dress. Claparols, on the other hand, designed several showstoppers using panels of lace and layered ruffles.

Overall, a little more editing and fine-tuning will certainly help. But we do see promise in these eight young designers, as we expect better designs and workmanship the next time around.

E-mail the author at sfashion@inquirer.com.ph

OMEGA-DIAZ

ABASEL

SAMSON

HERRERA

QUILENDRINO

HATE

CLAPAROLS

BUTTEQUIO

LEYVA

ULTRA-CHIC Filipino fashion from L Manila

Tan-Gan gives Filipino design new twist

By Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

LULU TAN-GAN, KNOWN AS THE "QUEEN of Katrin," has been in the fashion business since 1985, when she established her homegrown line called Tan-Gan. One of the most enduring names in the industry, she is known for her chic, contemporary yet demure designs.

Never one to rest on her laurels, Tan-Gan is again moving forward and upward with a new label called L Manila, an extension of her now iconic Tan-Gan label. Located at the Filipino Zone, Greenhill 3, L Manila aims to offer unique Filipino fashion innovations that are wearable yet high in style, and perfect for the stylish modern-day traveler.

The new label offers low-spirited luxury wear and bridal wear, among many other things, that take their cues from the Filipino consumer, art and history—not just the fashion dictates of the catwalk. Inspired by traditional Filipino tribal wear and Hispanic couturier, the store's luxurious looks are handcrafted in blended cotton, silk and delicate indigenous abaca and pina.

Aside from L Lel By Lulu Tan-Gan, which offers pieces in a broad range of threads like cool cotton for day or sexier for dressy evenings, L Manila also carries items by some of Manila's sought-after and upcoming designers.

Collections by Isabelaki Aurora for Tan-Gan stars, Pitoy Quiñones, Tippi Ocampo and Arey Cayetano make for an interesting mix. Quiñones, for one, is popular for his retro-modern, transformer pieces—jackets that morph into pants, or dresses that transform into skirts, for example.

Gayanie is known for flowing, feminine pieces that are detail-oriented. Organizing, lace collages and fabric mosaics are just some of the ornaments she is known for. Aurora, possibly the most celebrated among the guest designers, is famous for his architectural inclinations and inspirations, while Ocampo is known for her elegant and feminine designs that have just the right touch of whimsy.

Despite their different design styles, Tan-Gan and her guest designers all work toward the same objective. That is, to introduce a global Filipino fashion brand that-of-fers easy-to-wear, fluid, contemporary and ultra-stylish pieces.

Photography Dustin Tan ● Styling Pury Quiñones ● Makeup Dean of Elle Jimenez ● Hair Edson Eng ● Layout Ida Arciaga ● Model Charmagne de Guzman/Revon Models

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modal citizens modal citizens modal citizens modal

The guests came better-dressed

By Alex T. Vergara

THE RECENT MITSUBISHI fashion show was one of those rare moments when guests wear far better dressed than most of the models on stage. No kidding!

Thanks to the availability of high-street brands such as Zara, Mango and Topshop, the fashionistas on a budget has no excuses to look dated or dowdy these days. This, plus the fact that true designers are willing to pair with their clothes for a song, has made dressing up this easy.

Socialite Bubuca randomly dressed guests at the Peninsula Manila lobby. The operative word was young, as the outfits ranged from gamine, wide-legged trousers, to little black and white dresses.

Ah, if only the evening's main surprise had the same freedom of choice.

Abbi Simon in Rocanna Ocampo

MERYLL Chavez in Pinky Bustamante

KELLY Hiew in Rocanna Ocampo

FRANCESCA Ayala in Ivar Aseron

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Zegna brings made-to-measure service back in Manila

ALESSANDRO Sartori

Zegna is here to stay, according to SSI marketing manager Maia Francisco.

The menswear brand has recently moved over to SSI from its sister company, Benson's Commercial Corp., which acquired it in the mid-1990s.

The brand is strong in the Asian luxury menswear market, particularly China where it has 33 stores, according to Francisco, managing director for Southeast Asia, India and Australia. This is because Zegna has "stayed true to its purpose, which is to create the finest quality garments for men."

Heritage

Zegna traces its roots to a small wool mill called Lanificio Zegna, founded 98 years ago in Italy. The founder's son, Ermenegildo, expanded the trade by creating specialty fabrics—wool, silk, mohair, cashmere—sourced from the finest raw materials. The textiles are not only used today by the brand, but are also made for other luxury apparel labels.

The third-generation Zegnas launched out into clothing and international expansion. Today, the brand is run by the fourth generation, which is strengthening its retail and distribution points. The Zegna group has diversified to menswear with the manufacture of leather goods and other accessories.

"We source our own materials," Francis said. "We create our own fabrics, make our own garments and sell to our own stores. All our fabrics are made in our own mill, though we might source some of our knits. But you have to understand that wherever it's made, we call it 'Made in Zegna' because we control its production. The headline of the factory may be in Spain, but it's still owned by Zegna."

All its formal wear tailor is made in Zegna factories in Switzerland and Italy for licensees, including the Made To Measure pieces. Its Zegna products is made in China, thanks to machinery.

How Made To Measure, a Singapore-based Indian tailor will come to the Philippines, where clients can pick from 450 fabric swatches plus some seasonal and limited-edition selections. They can also pick the designs and details of their suit—the cut, the pockets, the linings, all are which they are measured in the "tender garment." The suits are made in Switzerland and takes six weeks for delivery. Final fitting and adjustments are done in store with an in-house tailor. The service is offered to select outlets only, and strictly by appointment.)

Smaller build

Given Filipinos' smaller build, an in-house tailor is available if a suit needs to be taken in. Bautista said summer is just evidently a good time for the brand to this as it sells more "in terms of volume," when suit styles are mostly unlined, and linen casuals, outerwear and lightweight jeans are in season.

It's also attracting a younger market with its new technical garments like the DNA jacket and the Solid jacket, which has solar panels on the collar that allow the wearer to recharge his iPod or cell phone battery.

Given the insane cost of its new suits hasn't put off its older core market, said Bautista. "They want to look younger and slimmer so they go for our leaner silhouettes," which also have higher, more modern lapels. "The Upper Casual, we have jean-like trousers that have more refined details, like carbonid stitching and finishing."

Zegna has also come up with so-called high-tech fabrics, like the Microsphere, a treated material that's stain-resistant and doesn't crease, which it uses to its Travelers suit.

"Good fabric is very important to us," Bautista said. "But, must be able to hang [your suit] overnight and it regains its shape."

MEDALLIED tie-dye dress by Coco Cabana

RIPPLE green corset top with ruching and bow accents by Coco Cabana worn with white short top

Think kiwi green, lemon yellow

GREAT SUMMER IN THE brights and feminine colors from BMF Colors, allow all, always sell a fashion story, and there's no other season wherein they have such exuberance than summer.

Kiwi Green and Lemon Yellow are the colors du jour for the South and beyond. Going green has come to mean many things these days, and Kiwi Green—named after the exotic fruit—is not only environmentally, but also stylishly correct. Just as green is the color of nature and growth, it also brings a lot of life to one's summer wardrobe.

Lemon Yellow is yummy and tangy just like the juice and the zest of a freshly squeezed fruit. It will not only bring a cheery chic, but add the zing to your summer look.

Resort babies can wear these colors with confidence in the most stylish ensembles by Coco Cabana. Flirty summer dresses that softly flow with the summer breeze, cool cover ups and fun separates in tie-dye designs will make you the life of the summer party.

The Coco Cabana collection is available at the Ladies Wear Department of all SM stores.

GREEN tie-dye dress with pleated neckline and keyhole accent based on belt by Coco Cabana

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BEAUTY

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

LIFESTYLE

How to keep your neck looking young

The author is a new mother, having just given birth to a healthy boy, Jose Vicente Benito Prieto.

THE NECK IS THE MOST disregarded part of the body when it comes to maintenance.

Well, what a big mistake! I now know that even if I try to religiously maintain my face to avoid wrinkles, and spread on all other every bath to keep my skin supple, my neck will be the last gauge of my age. I think it is one of the major tension writers of a certain age that wearing turtleneck tops—to hide something they forgot to take care of.

If you are like me and have forgotten to give your neck some TLC, it's time we started. Here are easy ways to keep our necks looking young:

* Spread on some sunblock on your neck when going outdoors.

* Moisturize. Use the one you use on your face on your neck.

* Be gentle. Treat your neck like very sensitive body part. Make sure to apply products in an upward gentle motion to avoid pulling.

* Choose good products. Consumer ads touted are good for the neck since it is a wrinkle-fighting ingredient. Products that contain elastin like collagen are also helpful.

It's never too late. With all the products available in the market and already part of our daily regimen, taking care of our neck should be easy, and most of all, worth it.

Get soothing massages or relaxing body therapies.
Check out the SPA section of the
DPC YELLOW PAGES
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Okie-Okie Ballarma, Actress
DHC Magazine
2002 Asian Hero for the Environment

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A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

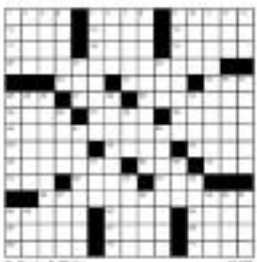
Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Lose it (over)
5 Jagged-cut
10 Allergy finding
14 Lairs in prisons
15 Crossbeams
16 _____ (also)
17 Ancient coin
18 Ambrosio
19 Gonzalez father
20 Cone grinder
22 Jailed Jones
relative
23 Jeffersonville bill
24 Isle of "The Tempest"
25 Word of "It's Over!"
26 Lead balloon
27 Thick, wiltlike
29 Tendon
30 Feedlot
problems
32 Sandwiches
34 Tennis
acronyms
35 Lori Caragiaan
comedy
40 Electric garlic
spreader
44 Aloud
45 Mushroom genre
46 Were on a
quick visit
47 Dateline
48 Planet
51 Actress Fritz
52 Words on letters
54 Basket's worth
55 Gathering
place
56 Ancient
attraction
60 Pile of hurt?
61 Power-to-the-
people feed
62 Breakbeat drive
63 Offender
doubting
64 Ballet starter
65 Eye anatomy
66 Fish breed
67 King or Asta
68 Wide-contract
offenses

DOWN
1 Unchasing
2 Needle case
3 Music for
4 Flannery
5 Comedy
6 On-the-fence
7 Casual carriage
8 Stores
9 Warmly
10 Author Dinesen
11 Drivers in
Indianapolis
12 Do-wrong
13 Unkept
21 Unfinished
24 Lithe in thinking
28 Dry cooking
segment
31 Cut to size
33 Book sun or
snake
35 Hurt pones
attachments
36 Social club
37 Dine sopranos
38 Public
proclamation
39 Tie the knot, part
40 Motto
41 Mask cover
extensively
42 Prowl
43 Cornerstone of
49 Courtroom
saying
50 Danger
52 Gum maguo
53 Pocket number
54 Wheel
55 Kinds music
57 Hurt lower
outside
58 TMO's genre
59 Sycophantic
grin, but
62 Bookkeeper
63 Government
agency

By Stanley B. Winters
4/11/08



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DANZE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Try to make some time for fun with yourself today. (You need some quiet personal time.) What can you do to recharge your batteries? Maybe you should consider yoga or some other activity that combines physical and mental benefits.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Be sure to pay attention to your thoughts before trying to act. Strange ideas and visions may be the result of the subconscious. If you're able to channel these energies, you'll be able to accomplish some very unusual things.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Be sure to take care of yourself today. Perhaps you feel pressured to do something and you want to throw it off!

CANCER (June 22 to July 22) With the Moon in your sign today, you have been doing a lot for others. It's time for you to take a break and treat yourself. You might even want to indulge in something that you don't normally allow yourself right now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Be sure to pay attention to your thoughts. Is it possible that you're overthinking things? Maybe you don't have to work like something right now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) You feel energized and ready to tackle the world. Unfortunately, you're also a little bit overwhelmed. Be sure to prioritize your responsibilities and don't overcommit yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Something about your private life might be on public display today. Hard? (Check your papers.) You might want to keep your thoughts to yourself. Be sure to manage your influence with someone in power.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Any kind of work, physical or mental, will please you today. You want to escape the drudgery of your daily routine!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be sure to pay attention to your home environment today. Is there something neglected that you've been putting off? Perhaps you want to clear them!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) If you have any creative ideas, they'll be more successful today. Don't hesitate to share them! There's someone who shows an interest in your ideas. Don't be afraid to express yourself and it could trigger a fiery attraction.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Work on getting your career organized today. Take your time and don't rush. Do double things around you. Think about what you can do to improve your health.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Romance is in the air today. Be sure to be receptive to it. You feel playful, creative and in the mood for fun. Take good time with children. Watch a movie or watch some sports.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	4			9				
		6			2			4
				5			8	
	3							
2		9	8		3	7		1
							5	
	8			4				
5			7			3		
				2			6	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

4/11

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	4	9	2	5	3	8	6	7
2	7	6	4	8	9	3	1	5
8	5	3	1	7	6	4	2	9
4	8	5	3	6	7	2	9	1
6	9	2	5	1	8	7	3	4
3	1	7	9	4	2	5	8	6
9	3	4	7	2	1	6	5	8
5	2	8	6	9	4	1	7	3
7	6	1	8	3	5	9	4	2

New product wakes up your skin

IT'S FUNNY THAT WOMEN are discouraged from ingesting caffeine because it can make their cellulite more pronounced aside from dehydrating the skin, making them look tired, older, haggard and blotchy.

When applied topically though, caffeine creams wonders by actually diminishing cellulite and decreasing thigh and buttocks dimension.

And when applied to the face, caffeine brings down puffiness in the eye area, revs up circulation and actually gives the skin a healthy flush and glow.

So when Estelle's laboratory launched its new anti-aging skincare product, I was the earliest one there.

The venue was the Beverly Hills Medical Group (BHMG) at 37 Paseo de Roxas St., Makati (nice to be confused with 6750 Beverly Hills Cir. lol).

My personal experience with Estelle's product lines has always been good. I particularly like Swiss it for acne prevention and skin rejuvenation, and Uridoc for excessively sweaty underarms, palms and feet.

I also like Bumbles, which takes care of big warts and calluses; and Physiogel, which is used by my friends with sensitive skin.

MAKEOVER
911
Kirsty Sakai

REVALESKIN is Estelle Laboratories Inc.'s first and only professional line of Organoceutical, anti-aging skincare products exclusively formulated with the potent, natural antioxidant Coffee Berry.

New product

Estelle's new product, the Revaleskin System, has gotten glowing reviews from magazines and talk shows abroad.

Its main active ingredient is Lipozeta Coffee Berry Extract, which is drawn to have the highest Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (Orac) than any other antioxidant such as green tea, Vitamin C, E, pomegranate, and blueberry.

Oxidation is what causes our skin to age, making it discolored, lined and rough.

Coffee Berry Extract is derived from the coffee cherry when it is sun-ripe or green to make Once coffee cherry has ripened and is ready to be harvested, the potent ingredient is gone so drinking coffee still won't make your skin premium.

Revaleskin (Re-va-les-skin) has two simple steps employing three products to be used day and night.

There is a Cleanser with 0.1 percent coffee berry extract (P2,700) to be applied on face and neck, followed by a day cream with 1 percent Coffee Berry Extract and SPF 15 (P4,500).

For lesbians, what should be used is cleanser followed by the night creams with 1 percent coffee berry extract (P5,000), which is a treatment and moisturizer in one.

You may use your existing eye cream over it and any treatments or serums you have in day or night creams.

Someone raised the question, if you can only have one cream/set which one would you get?

Dr. Rebecca Bautista, BHMG medical affairs coordinator, said if you already have your own existing high-spectrum sunblock, you may settle for the treatment night cream to be used day and night after the cleanser.

Day cream

Upon further research though, I found that the day cream contains soy which stimulates collagen production, slows down hair growth and actually reduces facial hair. (So those with hairy faces may actually pink this over the night cream.)

One thing I did not like—why only SPF 15? I would still opt for at least SPF 30 or top-although the SPF 15 will serve me well when staying indoors at night, when not facing my computer screen, or traveling under incandescent and fluorescent lights.

SPF 15 acts as a great primer, too. After applying and letting it set for five minutes, my foundation went on smooth and adhered to my skin longer. It seemed to fill into the gaps in my skin and grabbed on to my foundation and powder for a flawless finish. Suffice it to say this is my favorite of the bunch.

As for the cleanser, it was creamy, those with dry or sensitive skin would wish to Physiogel as I found this surprisingly great at keeping my oily skin toner for a long time.

Of course those with very oily skin can keep using their regular acid-astringent.

In a 12-week clinical study, it was shown that patients using Revaleskin had: decreased appearances of fine lines and wrinkles, lighter and more even skin tone, reduced redness, achieved smoother overall skin texture, and increased moisture retention.

For now it is available only at selected cleaner's clinics like Beverly Hills Medical Group Inc. 632-819-0358.

You may check out the website at www.revaleskin.com.ph.

Cult beauty brand unveils new counter

LEADING LUXURY COSMETIC BRAND La Mer recently unveiled its refurbished counter at Rustan's Makati.

"Our new counter reflects the kind of excellence that La Mer offers through our products and services," said La Mer marketing representative Sandra Cuenco.

Among those who graced the event were Miriam Magsaysay's television Czarina, Preview Magazine's Agnes Benigno Tiaoqui, Cosmopolitan's Boris Cacho & Irma Bermudez, Ira Mier followers Michelle Chan Lim, jewelry designer Clara Mariangco-Sevenguard, fashion model Malou Evora, Sonas & Stylo's Divine Reyes and Amel Dimaranan, and fashion and lifestyle photographer Frank Hurtbise.

Guest items included, among others, a sampling of La Mer's most popular products, luminous among them Crème de La Mer, the moisturizing facial cream that has become a cult hit.

Crème de la Mer makes skin smoother, softer and firmer, making it look virtually ageless. It is made of the highly potent Miracle Broth, a concoction developed by aerospace physicist Max Huber after he had suffered severe facial burns on his face.

The Miracle Broth consists of sea kelp, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, lecithin, and Vitamins C, E and B12 plus oils of citrus, eucalyptus, wheat germ, alfalfa and sunflower, blended in a unique biofermentation process.

The La Mer counter is on the ground floor of Rustan's Makati.

Godiva launches new Safe Sea

If you still haven't heard of this irresistible sugar product that gives beach lovers some fit, then you're definitely missing out! For fear of what could otherwise be an exciting and worry-free beach time this summer!

Some of us for sure have known someone - a friend or a relative perhaps who has been unfairly victimized to have been stung by a jellyfish. The time will remain the attention. But seeking help with the searing pain you can't have it all but ruin a supposedly enjoyable time at the beach.

Thus, three years ago, Godiva introduced the world's first and only Safe Sea Jelly product to you from the harmful UV rays of the sun but also specifically prevents you from the harmful stings of jellyfish.

This year, Godiva brings summer fun and excitement to a whole new level with the release of Safe Sea Jelly Star that's good for use by both adults and kids.

NO STINGS HERE!! A beach lifeguard uses the Godiva Safe Sea effectively and by doing so should protect him right left.

It now comes with a more brighter gel for translucency so you can picture the intense summer heat better.

The product comes in a 60 ml tube with a spray nozzle for precision application. It's a great buy for only 250 pesos.

The Godiva Safe Sea is a product of two years of extensive R&D, technological research. It is the answer to beach-goers clamor for a product that significantly prevents the stings of jellyfish. Now it's a beach must-have you shouldn't fail to bring along with you, especially this summer season.

Apply liberally on exposed skin at least 20 minutes before sun or water exposure. A reduced grid may be used to thoroughly apply which is highly advised. Reapply after prolonged swimming and after you have been in sun.

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EXCELLENT 24/7
Philippine Seven Corporation (PSC) reached another height as it continues to dominate the 24-hour convenience store operations in the country! This was honored through the achievement of two major awards - the **International franchise of the Year** for the Retail Non-food Category and the **franchisee of the Year** care of Mr. Vincent Guerzi - elevating PSC to the prestigious Hall of Fame of the Philippine Franchise Association
As a proud business partner, Selecta Ice Cream congratulates & salutes 7-Eleven in this grand achievement!
7-ELEVEN
SELECTA

All scents beautiful

With summer, it's time to change your perfume into something warmer, sunnier

Mabel Chua, Contributor

FIFTH Avenue is the time for the malls, palatable (and familiar) high-street treats like Paper, H&M, and Zara. But as we are on the subject of beauty, more important to note is the famous cosmetics wonderland: Sephora.

I still remember the first time I wandered along the store's well-

stocked aisles back in 2001: I marveled at the neat and neon of eyeshadows, makeup brushes, and pencils—amazed at the accessible piles of cotton balls, tissues, and swabs that let you play, play, play to your heart's content. I dropped by recently and re-

YVOIRE by Emilio Pucci

tained a refill of the classic Kenzo Flower by Kenzo—a light, powdery-soft bouquet favored by many. But for a moment I caught a glimpse of this fashionably psychedelic bottle that turned out to be the beloved Hours by Emilio Pucci. Hints of amaretto, jasmine, and patchouli lend the perfect sophisticated touch to any ensemble. The nod is heavenly in unpretingly out staying, for something so deep and heady.

New scent

Speaking of perfumes, now's a good time to transition to a new scent, with the summer, warmer months coming up. Fragrances are usually grouped according to the notes they collectively represent: citrus, fruits, fruity-floral, powder-floral, leafy-green, amber-musk, and other combinations of these. Aside from changes in seasons, body chemistry also plays a big role in: what would smell good on one person, and pungent on the next. Here are some guidelines when shopping for a new aromatic muse:

1. Spritz and go. Don't get persuaded into buying something until you've had a chance to literally sleep on it.

2. Spray strategically. Instead of dousing perfume on the usual parts—wrists, back of your earlobes, inside of your elbow—in one go, start with just a single spritz on one area on the first day, and then build up as the days go along.

Also, this gradual integration helps make sure you really, really like the scent, before you commit to a full bottle.

3. Weather the cold. Storing your perfume the right way ensures that when summer finally makes way for the cooler "low" months, you'll have a preserved selection to enjoy.

SEPHORA on Fifth Avenue, New York

DRINK up! BIANCA Valerio

How Bianca gets her looks—by eating

Isabel Rivera, Contributor

WE'VE HEARD the slogan, "You are what you eat," countless times.

Even beauty magazines have taken this mantra to heart, as many have begun swapping chemical compounds for science-based ingredients—fruit, green tea extracts, aloe vera, cucumber and oatmeal, to every other fruit, oat, and vegetable that can be juiced and/or torn a bottle.

Despite all these products, looking good still begins with eating right. I talked with Bianca Valerio to find out how healthy eating habits actually help her looking just as lush as the food she eats.

1. I can never have too much servings of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis.

2. I only eat complex carbohydrates like brown or red rice, and whole wheat bread or pasta.

3. I make sure to drink lots of water also, the water and fiber content in all these foods are essential for moisture balance and detoxifying my system.

Bianca Valerio is a model, host, stylist, make up artist and motivational speaker. We can all learn something from her food philosophy.

400 fruits and veggies in your diet.

Get the perfect lips in minutes

Kelly Mina, Contributor

WITH the right attitude and the right tube of lipstick, you can definitely go places. But while it may be easy to find the perfect lip color, correctly applying it may pose a challenge. Beautify your lips with these easy steps. Before you know it, you'll be applying lipstick like a professional.

1

PRIME

The lip primer has become an essential ingredient applying lipstick as it works as a lip conditioner while making your lipstick's pigment last longer. It is especially made for effortless lipstick application as it smoothens and refines lips.

2

FILL IN

When putting on lipstick, it is better to start at the center of your mouth and work your way outwards, stopping just before hitting the corners. Keep your hand steady by resting your elbow on a flat surface, like a table or a countertop. And to ensure that the color stays put, blot the first application with a tissue, then with translucent powder and layer on a second coat.

3

GLOSS

Instead of slathering the gloss on your lips, it is better to apply only on the middle of your bottom lip and smooth out from there. Remember that a little gloss goes a long way.

Shiny hair equals good hair day

Mabel Dans, Contributor

NAME: DENISE CASTRO
Age: 20
Occupation: Student
Question: How do you give your hair that shine?

"A good hair day starts with Clere Shine. It's a very effective product. I won't be able to achieve this intensity of shine without it. And it's always I use it everyday to avoid unsightly. A light application is enough because when I use too much, my hair becomes oily. Clere Shine also keeps the frizz and it gives

CHOOSE Denise digs Clere Shine.

sharing the secret, because the humidity makes my hair sticky. It helps to smooth out my hair."

HAVE A GOOD DAY!

"My own breasts, my own brains and my own bikini bulges!"

—Socialite Sunshine Dalton, in a fashion recently as radical in terms of a curly

LIFESTYLE

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The CAPITAL Towers

FEDERALAND

The cult of the designer bag

Why women are addicted to it, and why the smart ones see it as investment

By Ingrid Cleve Go
Contributor

YOUR (NOT HER REAL NAME) husband's a saver, addiction can so long ago. In six months, she accumulated over 30 luxury designer bags. She also carried only two or five of them.

"I just got addicted to that feeling of a high that a new designer bag purchase gave me. I didn't care if I had to live a hand-to-mouth existence just to afford buying the bags, because it just felt so good to reward myself with such luxury. I didn't realize, or maybe I was in denial, that those purchases would catch up with my finances one day," she said.

Her secret unraveled only when she had to sell off most of her pre-owned bags at a loss to pay for her debts.

Vickie is not alone. Many women today have been seduced by the aspirational message behind owning designer bags—that they can afford "luxury."

For P59,280, you can walk away with Louis Vuitton's iconic Speedy. That money can perhaps get you only a small pair of earrings in 14K gold with some pave diamonds. Which has more "bang for the buck"—an iconically recognizable bag or a barely-there pair of earrings?

Pursuing designer bags like the classic Louis Vuitton Speedy have become "investment" pieces. Bags are now somehow positioned a notch below jewelry in the investment list. Some women are owning designer bags as a long-term investment. They see themselves as custodians of these bags, with plans to pass them down to the next generation.

Others admit that owning a designer bag or being seen with one makes them feel good and powerful. They walk with more confidence and even get better service from sales executives in stores.

Carrying a Louis Vuitton bag (or for the more jaded, a Chanel 2.55 or a Gucci creation), either of which have no official brand presence in the Philippines) is also an affirmation that they can indulge in and afford to live a certain lifestyle—even if they have to pay by installment for the bag.

Beware, however. Buying a bag on credit card installment carries risks. Buyers will be charged interest on top of the premium fee for something they may not really afford to pay for. The interest is charged to allow buyers to pay in 3, five even 12 month terms.

Such payment scheme, of course, is not commonplace in luxury houses—again, the illusion of "affordable luxury."

Those who get sucked into this "luxury-is-a-necessity" system by accumulating the latest Chanels and Vuittons while paying for more and more interest on top of the premium are their finances eventually going haywire.

There are even stories of women who go to the extreme lengths of borrowing money just to buy themselves a designer bag or two.

While indulging in designer bags is no sin, going bankrupt for them is reckless and irresponsible.

That said, since "investing" in a designer bag requires a sizeable sum, it's important to know what's behind the brand and how to pick a really good piece.

If you want buy a designer bag, consider a brand that has been around for a long time, and is a style that's tried and tested. A bag that has been in the brand's lineup for a very long time only means one thing—it has transcended trends and will remain ageless, which makes it a classic and a true investment piece.

INGRID GO is a blogger, freelance journalist and certified bag hag.

MORE BUSINESS P2

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DESIGNER'S SPACE

Gallery within a boutique

Text by Nina Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Quiao Panaligan

PATRICE DIAZ'S SHOP IN SALCEDO Village, Makati, has a high, multi-level ceiling which gives the place a gallery like ambiance that's ideal for showcasing her sculptural pieces.

Located in the back of Power Gallerie Plaza on Tordesillas Street, the ground-floor studio is quiet and accessible to her clients who are mostly brides and debutantes.

"Finding a place in the mall was out of the question," says Diaz. "Brides demand some semblance of exclusivity."

Diaz even bought a pair of Persian carpets, one of which smiled up to the living area, to make her clients feel extra special. The spacious fitting area, with a huge wall mirror, is secluded from the rest of the shop by taupe silk jacquard drapes.

A gold chandelier, one of Diaz's second-hand finds from nearby Shanghai, matches the Persian carpet. A sea-blue chandelier, hanging from one of the receiving area's shop ceilings, gives the monochromatic space a jolt of color.

It took Diaz, who was based for a time with her family in Shanghai, and resident-interior designer Christina Garcia almost two months to transform the bare space into their vision of a "regallery within a boutique."

"The first time we sat down to discuss it, Christina wondered right away what I had in mind," says Diaz. "We went on the same page."

"By then, my husband and I had decided to move back to Manila."

In love of mannequins, Diaz opted to display her signature gowns made mostly of sheers on hangers. A clothes rack on the opposite side of the L-shaped room has more casual, day-to-evening separates.

DIAZ'S work table has a Wedgwood, color varnished, vase of dried eucalyptus branches and dozens of pencils and markers.

A SCULPTURAL piece made partly of shells

Adding to the gallery feel are framed black-and-white photos of Diaz's clothes that he dared by seasoned photographer Jun de Leon, featured in hanging rows, the designer left the frames leaning against the wall.

Diaz's wedding table, an antique-looking, walnut-colored piece designed by her cousin, Vic Catalan, is dressed in frills. Her chair is wrapped in a removable black-and-white canvas cover.

Apart from pencils, markers and a pair of scissors placed in a huge glass cantonic several candles, interior heroes, color varnishes and a vase of dried eucalyptus branches are on the table.

Mrs. and Garcia also paid close attention to the lighting. Thanks to the building's glass façade, Diaz can work well into the afternoon without turning on the light.

"I'm the type of person who works best under natural light," she says. "I tend to work cleaner during the day, but I don't mind doing some sketching at night when my client's area is all that's asleep. Some peace and quiet certainly helps in the design process."

A SITTING area with a huge mirror by the main door

THE PETITE Patrice Diaz inside her high-ceilinged shop in Makati

A SEA-BLUE chandelier, one of the designer's second-hand finds, gives the space a jolt of color

THE SPACIOUS dressing room comes with a pink Persian carpet that matches the chandelier

How to invest in a designer bag

From page F1

WHILE DIAMONDS ARE ALWAYS considered "investments," small pave diamonds on rings or earrings won't always command a high resale price. That said, P40,000 will get you only a small pair of solitaire diamond earrings (definitely under 1 carat).

A good, well-constructed designer bag is bigger and has more function than a pair of earrings. It can carry your wallet, and your other important personal belongings.

You can recoup down the cost of the designer bag by using it often. But, like a true investor, always do your research.

Brand. Ideally, go with a brand that's been around for a long time. Owners see, that brand has excellent after-sales service for cleaning and even refurbishing your bag. There are also newer brands that offer after-sales service for their bags, so always make sure to ask these questions before your first bag purchase.

Style. Unless you have unlimited funds to buy designer bags, always go with the classic style first, the doctor's bag (think Louis Vuitton speedy), and the bigger bag (think Hermes Birkin, which was the very first bag to reach the airport-are-definite-classics in the style category. You discover go-astray with them. And they can be passed on to your daughters and nieces one day.

Functionality. Don't buy a small designer bag because that's the only size you can afford. Save up for a larger bag instead. The idea that a smaller piece is cheaper and more affordable should not be your criteria, especially if you do not really carry small bags. Do not compromise, or you might end up regretting it.

Quality. You spend P1,000 on a sweatshirt, two-designer bag that you may toss out after three months of heavy use. You may have over 20 more designer bags, but add up the total purchase value and you wouldn't have been able to buy one bag from a good designer label. Always choose quality over quantity.

Materials. The bag you like comes in two different leathers: pebbled pigskin or suede calfskin. Think: Manila is a very humid city. If you don't want your bags swell, they will almost immediately succumb to molds. So between these two types of leathers, go with pigskin since it's more durable and easier to clean. Do research on the small-print leathers before your purchase.

Ingrid Chua-Sio

Best-selling bag at Louis Vuitton: Monogram Speedy 30
Fastest-selling bag at Hermes: Birkin
Best-selling bag at Gaspard: St. Louis PM tote
Average price for a new Hermes 35cm Birkin in regular leather from a Hermes boutique: P395,000
Average price for a new Louis Vuitton Neverfull MM or Speedy 30 at the LV boutique in Greenbelt: P55,000
Average price for a Goyard St. Louis PM from a Goyard boutique: P40,000
Average price for a new medium Classic classic 2.55 from a Chanel boutique: P150,000
Expired number of Chanel bags within an hour or weekend at Rockwell: 11
Expired number of Louis Vuitton bags within an hour or weekend at Rockwell: 35
Number of Hermes Birkins in Manila: 200
Number of premier luxury bag brands available in stores/ boutiques in Manila: Over 15

NICOLE Kidman in Prada

SIENNA Miller carries a Prada Borsa Mappa Striped bag

TILDA Swinton holds a Prada Borsa bag

Hollywood stars don Prada

HOLLYWOOD'S BIGGEST STARS FORT Prada's latest pieces, from the fashion house's ethereal dresses to the most whimsical accessories.

Oscar winner Hilde Swinton of "Michael Clayton" fame was spotted at the San Sebastian Film Festival carrying the Borsa Bag from Spring/Summer 2008, a roomy, drawstring tote featuring a rustic, hairy print, while the actress paired with a cool one-piece 2007 Fall/Winter collection.

Actress Sienna Miller, who will be seen next in "The Edge of Love," donned Prada's striped multicolor hatching in sequin beaded and bright hues of pink, red and violet.

Incredibly beauty Nicole Kidman goes for decidedly feminine looks, including a cream shift with vintage-inspired details like soft pleats, ribbons and ruffles or a pink georgette dress with crepe de chine detail.

At the United Nations Development Fund for Women's Golden white tie dinner, Kidman donned in a glitzy, sequined gown.

Actress Maggie Gyllenhaal of the upcoming Batman's flick, "The Dark Knight," wore edgy retro with a polka-dot black-and-white dress paired with opaque tights and pumps.

In the Philippines, Prada is exclusively distributed by Rustan Specialties, Inc. and is available at Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati.

GOINGS ON

Thai New Year festival set in Taguig

THE ROYAL THAI EMBASSY IN the Philippines will host a public celebration of the Thai New Year festival, also known as Songkran Festival, on April 12 and 13, 2-6 p.m. in Bonifacio High Street, Taguig.

The event will feature cultural exhibitions, Thai cooking demo, Muay Thai demo and competition, traditional water splashing, and spices on general knowledge about Thailand.

Blogging seminar

ExactMinds, Norwegian add-commercializations professionals are to stage its Corporate Blogging and Online Reputation Management seminar today 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., at the SEN Conference Room, Ateneo campus in Makati City. The speakers are Jayvee Hernandez, director of disciplined; Andrian Lee, managing director of GoaPay Philippines and Emerging Markets for GoaPay; Dustin Andaya, founder of IslandPinas.net; and Kees Kock, search manager for Sydon Media. Pre-registrations for the seminar fee of P1000 will go to Cri-Le Project of Ayala Foundation. Pre-register at http://cforms.eventbrite.com or e-mail ingrid@exactmin.com.

Gardening workshops

Centerpiece Pot Making will be held April 17 and 18, 1-4 p.m. Watershed Pen Planter will be held April 19 and 20, 1-4 p.m. To be conducted by Barbara professor Seraphina S. Melillo, all seminars will be held at Metro Point Arts, King Louis Gardens Center, Manila Dwelling Bank on Edsa and Dolcon Ave., Bonanon City. Advance registration is required at least three days before the seminar date. Call 5094000, 4382479, 0911-8321312, e-mail melillobotanik@yahoo.com.

Wellness expo

The Beauty and Wellness Expo is ongoing until today, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., at the Activity Center of Trinoma, Edsa cor. North Ave., Quezon City. Activities include on-stage demonstrations, audio-visual presentations and product sampling.

Reading workshop

This summer, Learningville Center for Learning and Discovery teams up with Scholastic Learning Center for the Scholastic Reading Starter, a customized reading workshop for children 6-8 years old. The workshop allows children to learn letter names and sounds, develop phonological awareness, gain blending and decoding skills and read short selections. All programs start April 14. Visit Learningville at 59 Kalayaan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City or call 4345888.

World Voice Day concert

The Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, in collaboration with The Medical City presents soprano Josephine Barnes, mezzo-soprano Malcolm Joaquin, tenor Raymond Rotter, US-based tenor Vladimir Valera and "Pinoy pine tree" finalist Gian Magdangal with pianist Carlos Piocos in a concert on April 16, 10 a.m., at the Medical City Ayala. Call 8355788.

WEEKEND MARKET OPENS

Megaworld Corporation Commercial Division head Kevin Tan (second from left) gets help from chef Verna Bautista-Chiongbian in preparing a commercial salad item to open the Market on The Hills, a weekend market at the Clubhouse of Corinthian Hills along Temple Drive. Among the culinary experts featured every Saturday and Sunday are chefs Gene Gonzalez, Amelia Alba and Carol Mongado. Apart from snacking the country's top chefs in action, families from nearby villages can also buy organic produce, native delicacies and the chefs' own gourmet specialties every Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

SAILIN' BLUES. Red-and-white jumper worn over a white shirt by 'Lil Lizzie on her red striped shirt and matching shorts by Bailey Boys on him.

Nautical fashion for kids

SM OFFERS A NAUTICAL COLLECTION for toddlers this summer.

Little boys come to outfits inspired by ocean liner cruises—cardigans, nautical striped shirts, and white pants by Bailey Boys. Hoodies with matching shorts make way for fun times on deck.

Little girls make waves in pinny jumpers, vests, skirts, shorts, and tops by Girls Edition and 'Lil Lizzie.

The nautical collection by Girls Edition, 'Lil Lizzie, and Bailey Boys—is tasks exclusively distributed by SM—are available at the Infants' Wear Department of all SM stores.

ON BOARD. Blue-hooded gray shirt layered with collared, striped inner top and blue shorts by Bailey Boys.

BOOK ON ALIWAN FIESTA LAUNCHED

Manila Broadcasting Company and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) formally launched a collectible book on Philippine festivals, taken from the context of Aliwan Fiesta's first five years. Written and edited by Susan Fonseca-Ocampo, the book features photos taken by Joey de Leon, Rico Gonzales and Jonathan de la Cruz. Photo shows (from left) Joey de Leon, CCP president Nestor Jardin, Susan Ocampo and MBC president Roperto Nicdao Jr.

PARTNERSHIP FOR BEAUTY

Bluewater Day Spa recently inked a deal with Spa Essentials, exclusive distributor of Bodiqua Skin Care line in the Philippines. Gilet Gabino, operations manager of Bluewater Day Spa, and Dr. Miss Tarvitt, president of Spa Essentials, say that the deal will greatly benefit the public in its search for the ultimate skincare treatment. Bodiqua's products include Milky Cleanser for normal/oily/combination skin, and Cleansing Oil for dry/sensitive skin. Bluewater Day Spa has branches in Market Ignacia St., Quezon City, Platinum Antipolo, Greenhills, Tropical Palms Condominium, Legaspi Village, Makati, and Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang.

Batik and cuisine

A CELEBRATION OF INDONESIAN fine cuisine, cuisine and culture dubbed as Batik and Cuisine: A Heritage of Indonesia on April 17-20 kicks off with a fashion show by Indonesian designer Adjie Notonagoro on April 16 at Shangri-La Hotel Manila.

Indonesian supermodels will set the catwalk ablaze while showing the latest collection of Notonagoro's haute couture featuring batik, kebaya and gowns in a not-night only show.

The Indonesian fashionista will conduct a seminar on batik-making on April 17.

Delight in authentic Indonesian cuisine prepared by guest chefs from Jakarta, Indonesia. Dine at Riviera Café and get a chance to win 3 days, 2 nights stay with breakfast for two at the Millennium Hotel in Jakarta and one round-trip ticket to Jakarta courtesy of Cebu Pacific airlines.

Call 8516888 or e-mail marcom@heritagehotelmanila.com.

ALL DRESSED UP for the Captain's Night cocktails and dinner: Joanne Rae Ramirez, Captain Olav Nyanset, Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Joy Abregan of Aegean Air Inc.

PURSER Harriet Gomez and assistant guest-services manager Jennifer Zafra

How I got hitched in China

COLORFUL dragon sculptures in the middle of the main drive in Hoi An. Above, maidens waiting for their choice of husbands, as men walk into the Great Li and Miao Village in Sanya, China.

HAVE HOPE...now converted into a restaurant

OUR jersey and officious Philippine Airlines stewardesses

ARIES THAT HAS FULL-DAY EXPOSURE in De Island, we sailed off at sunset for our next stop: the fellow-top-meeting, the port of Chan Hing.

While sailing that night, we met one of the members of the ship, Filipina Jennifer Zafra. This fantastic multilingual assistant guest-services manager really took extra good care of us during the whole voyage onboard this awesome 78,491-ton cruise-ship, sweetlemons.

She told us that our Indo-China Explorer would end in Manila, but not to worry because the ship would have to must go to Hong Kong for night "Asian Legacies." It would include Shanghai, Fukuoka (Japan), Pusan and Cheju (Korea) for their exciting sojourns on April 5, 8, 12 and 15.

Then there is the other seven-night "Pearl of the Orient" cruise to Shanghai, Kyoto and Fukuoka (Japan), Pusan and Cheju (Korea) on April 23 and 30.

The Star Goddess will resume to Asian itineraries in December through its 6th Legend of the Seas. Meanwhile Celebrity Cruises will offer Australia and New Zealand starting November on the fantastic Millennium. Check them out and you're in for a dream-cruise-come-true.

Going back to Chan May we entered the merchant town of Hoi An on foot. It was a great choice since it was any photogenic place, dream and shopper's paradise. The place was just picture-perfect.

The place is located close to Da Nang. Our tour guide told us that Da Nang was the main landing spot and massive air base of the Americans during the Vietnam War. Looking at this place, one would immediately see how far Vietnam has become since our wars days. There are more than three-kilometers of luxurious seashores resorts and cabanas, some of them going US$800-$1,000 a night.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Aragon using YKL Photo Solutions

Arriving in Hoi An, one wouldn't miss those fantastic French-colonial mansions, shrines, ancient Japanese bridges, amazing quaint restaurants and more great sights along the cool town street, plus fantastic shopping opportunities.

Also, dahlings, Hoi An still has that Old World charm. It's definitely worth a visit. Its wonder Unesco named it a World Heritage Site.

SHOPPING at Hoi An

GORGEOUS handmade rolled full lanterns

April's an interesting overnight cruise, we landed in Chinese "Tropical Paradise," Sanya. You probably wouldn't think of going to China for beaches, but you'd find some spectacular ones in Sanya's shore-side city. It has dazzling silver sand, bright blue surf and a colorful underwater world. A great excuse, then, to hold the Star Miss World beauty pageant there.

Our tour took us out of the city on a breathtaking drive to the Great Li and Miao Village.

As we entered the village, we were welcomed by 40 beautiful women. "This is how it was centuries ago," our guide told us. "The women would line up and choose the men passing in the village to be their husband during a certain festival."

VIETNAMESE hat seller

Mock wedding

Well, before I could bat an eyelash, I got hitched. Yes! Married, dahlings. It was a mock wedding, but I had stakes!

Joanne Ramirez, Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Joy Abregan were super amused and laughing till they could hardly breathe during the wedding ceremony.

Next stop was the open-air railroad theme where they did dances that include the wedding, rice planting and harvesting by performers who were dressed and looked like our teacher Lygeia.

From Sanya, we sailed back to Hong Kong. On that night, we were greatly honored as Captain Olav Nyanset, the master of this floating island, asked the four of us to be his guest at the Captain's table.

Wine! Out of 1,800 travelers onboard, we were among the chosen ones with two other couples from England and another couple from Australia.

You should have seen how proud all our countrymen (waiters of the grand dining salon) were when they saw us being treated like royals by the Captain, no less.

Well, dahlings, that's what our sun experience, enjoy and treasure in one's memory bank, when cruising the world from the top of Alaska to Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand and Asia on one of the fabulous Royal Caribbean cruises.

Coming back home again with our best pal, Philippine Airlines, remained for us friendly, efficient in-flight service. I dreamed of the wonderful time we had on board the Rhapsody of the Sea.

Yes, dahlings, any Royal Caribbean vacation should definitely be one of the best you could ever experience.

For more info and inquiries, contact your travel agents or better yet, Aspan Air Inc., international representative in the Philippines of Royal Caribbean International. Call 8922700 or 8943807; e-mail rjv-caribbean@aspanair.com.ph; fax 8922790.

FULLY preserved 19th-century Japanese bridge

Erratum

His name is Reuben Valerio, not architect Gerry Corcoran.

ENTERTAINMENT

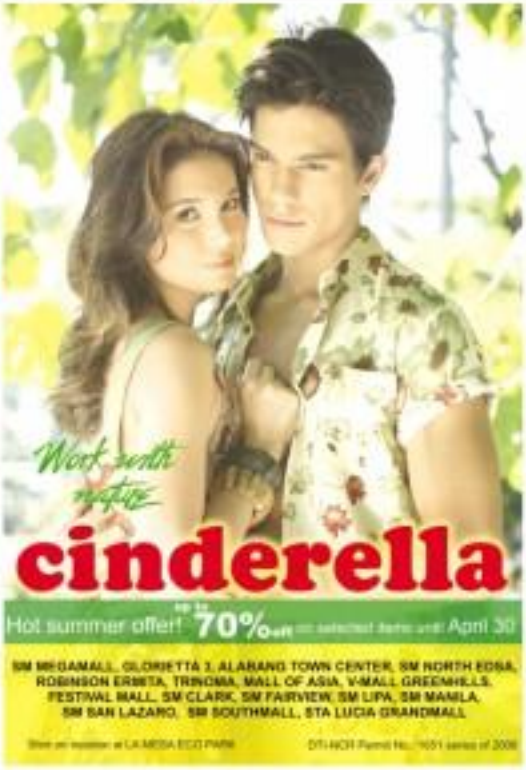
Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

'Songs of Love' concert

CHRISTOPHER DE LEON, JOSE MARI CHAN, PH. JERRY GO-NGOL, SVZL, Fr. Erick Santos, Bro. Jun Simsong, OP (To Love') and the Arrogant 5 Orbit Bandanas, Arun Gogtay, Jon Escoto, Obet Calvillas and Adrian Bergenillo) join Ruth Soriano in a concert dubbed "My Offering: Songs of Love" on Sunday, April 13, 7 p.m. at the Meralco Theater. Call 721-7407 or 727-3300.

ANTONIO P. Tuviera with characters in APT Entertainment's most-awaited animation feature. Story on page G6.

Fil-Am Miss America's journey of healing
Only In Hollywood /G4



Indie update /G6

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NIM'S ISLAND

A SWARM of photographers descended upon Britney Spears' car as she arrives for a child custody hearing in Los Angeles on Oct. 16. –

THE LOS ANGELES, CALIFornia police chief on Thursday said a proposed new city law aimed at protecting celebrities from aggressive paparazzi would be ambiguous and impossible to enforce.

Chief William Bratton said in a report that coming laws on jaywalking, speeding and assault would instead be used to deter aggressive photographers, whose "must-be-shot pursuit of singer Britney Spears and other celebrities prompted calls for a crackdown.

Los Angeles councilman Tomás Zine proposed creating a "personal safety zone" to regulate paparazzi shortly after city police in January fined $25,000 to escort Spears from her home across town to a psychiatric unit in the middle of the night.

Roadblocks

The police and roadblocks and an escort by at least a dozen motorcycles and squad cars were needed to prevent photographers from documenting what became the second trip by the troubled pop star to the hospital in a month.

The city instead gave news helicopters and the world media lengthy television pictures of the Spears' convoy.

Zine, a former police officer, said the Los Angeles paparazzi were becoming more

Jaywalking, speeding and assault laws may instead be used against unruly photographers

aggressive and posed a danger both to Hollywood stars and the public.

Celebrities like Spears and Paris Hilton are followed 24 hours a day and sometimes pursued in high speed car chases by dozens of paparazzi whose numbers in Los Angeles have swelled to between 300-400 from about 25 some 15 years ago.

Zine suggested creating a minimum "personal safety zone" of several feet of clear space between paparazzi and the individuals they are photographing. The proposed law has yet to be debated by the city council.

Favoritism?

Bratton said however that the proposed council ordinance about who is classified as a "celebrity" or "paparazzi," whether the LAPD is showing favoritism toward stars and whether the general public is entitled to the same protection.

He said it would "create an inequitable and ambiguous code that would likely be unenforceable."

Zine called Bratton's comments premature and vowed to pursue his proposal. "We need specific sections [of the law] dealing with the paparazzi," Zine told reporters.

"What do we do the next time Britney Spears has to go to the hospital? Do we spend another $[25,000] and shepherd them police resources that are needed so far?" he said.

An inquest in London ruled on Monday that Britain's Princess Diana and her lover Dodi al-Fayed were unlawfully killed by the grossly negligent driving of their chauffeur and paparazzi photographers pursuing them into a Paris road tunnel 12 years ago. – Reuters

HOLLYWOOD paparazzi swarm during a rendezvous near Spears' home in LA. They trail the actress day and night now.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 ASYLUM	2 NIM'S ISLAND	3 DOOMSDAY	4 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN			
GLORIETTA 4	1 ASYLUM	2 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	3? NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN				
	4 SEMI-PRO	5 DOOMSDAY	6 NIM'S ISLAND	7 SHUTTER			
GREENBELT 1	1 ASYLUM		2 NIM'S ISLAND				
GREENBELT 3	1? NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN		2? NIM'S ISLAND				
	3 SEMI-PRO	4 SHUTTER	5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL				
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1? NIM'S ISLAND		2 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL				
	3 ASYLUM	4 SEMI-PRO	5 SHUTTER				
AYALA CENTER CINEMAS	1 FOOL'S GOLD	2 STEP UP 2	3 SOLSTICE	4 [illegible]			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 NIM'S ISLAND		2 ASYLUM				
	3 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	4 SHUTTER	5 SUPAH PARALELOGRAM				
TRINOMA	1 SHUTTER	2 DOOMSDAY	3 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	4 ASYLUM			
	5 SEMI-PRO	6 ACROSS THE UNIVERSE	7? NIM'S ISLAND				

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

- Glorietta — Glorietta 1 Fashion Show — April 11, 6 PM, Glorietta Activity Center
- Greenbelt — 5 Photographers: Shared Moods Photo Exhibit — April 9 - 15, Greenbelt 5, The Gallery
- Alabang Town Center — Acoustic Series / Story Science — April 11, 6 PM, Triad Plaza
- Ayala Center Cebu — Launch of Shades of Summer — April 12, 4:30 PM , Piazza Solana
- Market! Market! — Automatic Center Appliance Spree — March 28 - April 13 , Activity Center
- Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents ALTAR BOYZ — April 11 - 27, 2008 — For inquiries, you can call 687-27-70 or visit www.repertory.philippines.com
- Ayala Museum — Registration ongoing for Saturdaycare Summer Art Workshops — A Healthy Lifestyle Solution — April 14 - 25 — Level 3
- Tsi Nonna — The Natural Source Beauty and Workshop and Event — Get helpful tips and good buys to further enhance the natural beauty in you! — March 25 - April 14 | 10 AM - 6 PM | Level 1 — Beauty and Wellness Expo 2008 — April 10 - 11 | Activity Center

Teens & Kids Zone

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3rd Level, Glorietta 3

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Baby Fashion Depot
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Bench for Kids
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Calzas
Cats for Less
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Kids of Days
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Mad Hip Pet
Blue Star
Buffalo
Carmela
Del Sitio
Forever & Ever
Footmax
Hang Ten
Kaibigan
Levi
Lee Station
Pedi Manila
Puma & Penis
Rocky
Skin
Vans
Studio 21
Forever
Mango
H
Penshoppe
TEENS
Adidas
All Saints Up
American Eagle
Abercrombie
Bape
Bossi
Gift Factory
Gio Stuff
Speed Up
Hi-Top
Jacobs
Jacobs
Levi Stuff
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Candy Cove
Color Shoot
Confetti
Cubes
Fibers

Glorietta · Greenbelt · The Town · Ayala Center Cebu · Market! · Tsi Nonna

How Fil-Am Miss America, family cope with tragedy

(First of two parts)

LOS ANGELES—"As I write [down] my feelings... the tears would not stop falling," Angela Perez Baraquio Gray, the first Miss America of Filipino descent, recalled about writing a song dedicated to her brother, Albert, who committed suicide five days less than two weeks after he turned 26 in 2006.

Angela's song, which she wrote with her husband, Thatcher Gray, and brother-in-law Travis Gray, is included in a CD, "Lost + Found," that the Baraquio family lovingly recorded as a tribute to Albert, the youngest male among 18 children. A medium it was a healing and cathartic release for Angela and her eight siblings, the album is also apparently an contemporary inspirational pop. "We want to inspire others to spread the message of hope and comfort," Miss America 2001 told us in an e-mail interview.

Angela and Albert, who are eighth and ninth, respectively, in the brood of Filipino immigrants Claudio and Rigoberta Baraquio, were always close growing up in Hawaii. They even rescued superhero when they studied at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. So one was no wonder than Albert when Angela was crowned the first Miss America of Asian descent.

Albert moved to 2004 to Irvine, California, where he worked in a bank. Two years later, Angela, her husband and their firstborn, who is now 2, moved to Irvine (to Anaheim). On Nov. 11, 2006, a few days before his 28th birthday (Nov. 15), Albert made a first attempt to end his life. Angela's brother-in-law found him unconscious inside his car in front of his apartment. Since Angela was pregnant with her second son at the time, the family did not tell her of the incident until after she gave birth.

Angela recalled her emotional conversation with her beloved brother after she was told: "I asked him what could be so bad, and he said, 'Everything.' I told him he had everything going for him. I counted his blessings, but it was as if he was blind to what was there. I remember to say it was a difficult time for Angela, who was still reeling from the caesarean operation and from having to nurse and take care of her newborn. "I was crying when I called my mom that night, and it heightened the pain I felt from my surgery," she said.

What happened?

Two brothers came to bring Albert back to Hawaii, to seek professional help and be with the rest of the family. On Nov. 28, 2006, Albert killed himself through asphyxiation. Angela found herself asking aloud, "What happened? Where are you, Al?"

Still grief-stricken as Albert's birthday and first death anniversary loomed, the family, under brother John's initiative and leadership, agreed to record an album in memory of Albert. The Baraquios, who sang together in their parish church, had always been asked when they would release a CD. Albert's death prevented the recording of the album. Angela—Cecilia, Jerome, Luej, John, Theresa, Bernadette, Rose, Angela and Gloria—to compose and perform 13 songs that make up "Lost + Found."

The CD, launched last November to a near-filled concert where the family sang together again after many years, is available on www.thebaraquios.com and www.rebornrecords.com.

Angela and her husband have decided to stay in California with their two sons, Isaiah, 3, and Micah, 1 (he would have been Albert's godson). They have started a company, Iris Entertainment, Inc., which offers Hawaiian and Polynesian entertainment to corporate clients, conventions and weddings. Angela was a teacher at her alma mater, Holy Family Catholic Academy, when she entered the Miss Hawaii contest for the second time on a dare from two of her students. She went on to win that title and then the Miss America crown. "I was studying at a Catholic school," said the holder of a master's degree in Educational Administration. She is working on getting a California teaching credential so she can teach again.

"My outlook on life has changed since Albert's death," she shared. "It made me realize that my actions affect others more than I'll ever realize. This precious gift of life is so fragile, and should never be taken for granted." Below are excerpts of our interview with the 73rd Miss America.

How painful and cathartic at the same time was writing the lyrics, putting them to music and then recording the resulting song, "Living for You"?

Where my brothers John first asked the family to come together and record a tribute CD for Albert, we all thought it was a good idea to get our feelings out and openly and honestly deal with what happened. I asked my husband, Thatcher, and his brother, Tasmania, to help me write a song because they are both professional musicians. Tasmania has a major in Music from UC (University of California) Irvine and he knows theory well. He started playing some guitar licks for me while I sat at the computer and just started typing. The tears would not stop falling.

Eventually, I took that rough draft, and made my feelings concise, which matched the tune. Thatcher and Tasmania helped me mesh it musically and lyrically. Several words in the song were disclosed to my brother Albert specifically, but John asked me to make the song more universal so everyone who had lost a loved one could relate to it. "Living For You" is the product of several months of painful introspection, which also served as a cathartic experience to help me on the road to healing. The lyrics are written on the CD jacket [pardon me www.lunaspin.com].

In the aftermath of Albert's death, you said you asked the questions, "What happened?" and, "Where are you, Al?" Have you found answers?

I was born and raised Catholic and, growing up, I was taught that suicide is wrong because only God can decide when life should end, it is not ours to dispose of. After Albert died, I was hoping that wasn't true. I knew Albert was psychologically sick, and how could God send someone to eternal damnation for having sick?

When I flew to Hawaii for his funeral, the first thing my family did was meet with a counselor, who also happened to be a priest. He set our fears to rest when he told us that Albert is safe now, and that the people we should be worried about were ourselves because we had to deal with the void that Albert left behind. He assured us of the Church's position. "Grave psychological disturbance, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or sorrow can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide." He told us that, to commit a mortal sin, you have to be mentally healthy, and since the doctors suspected Albert might have had bipolar disorder, he was not mentally fit. I knew that Albert has a chance at eternal salvation because God is merciful.

When Albert attempted suicide for the first time, your family did not tell you because you were pregnant. How did you eventually get to talk to him?

On Nov. 9, a Thursday, I called Albert at his house and spoke to him for 90 minutes. He had called my mom in Hawaii earlier, asking her to send him a rosary because he was struggling with "girl problems." Worried, my mom told me to call him. I'm so glad I did.

Albert told me that he was tired of being labeled as someone who lived to party all the time. He said all he could think about was God. I invited him to my house that weekend, since my husband was going to be away on business. I told him I could give him some of my own Catholic inspirational books and we could have Mass together, talk and hang out. He said it was a good idea and that he'd be over on Saturday.

I called him around 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 11, and he picked up. I hadn't heard from him all day. I asked where he was and if he was still coming over. He said, "Sorry, I'm just taking care of some business. I'll talk to you later. Love you, bye." Just hours later, my brother-in-law found him unconscious in his car. I did not find out about this suicide attempt until Nov. 18. I had a scheduled C-section on Friday, Nov. 17.]

Albert's birthday was on Nov. 15. My two brothers flew from Hawaii to visit him back then. It was the last day I would see Albert alive. That visit also the day I asked him for my son's godmother. He said he would be honored. They flew back to Hawaii the next day. I told him to be sure he'd be back for Albert's baptism. He said he would.

On Nov. 19, Albert called from Hawaii and left me a message while I was receiving in the hospital, saying congratulations on giving birth and that he was sorry for what he did. I called him back on Nov. 20. It would be our last conversation. We talked about his first attempt, and I asked why he did it. I asked if really wanted to die. He said that, at the time, he did. He said he couldn't explain it.

He sounded like a very different person from the guy I saw just days before, when the family was still keeping his first suicide attempt a secret from him. In that last conversation, I know [somehow that] my boys and our relationship would change forever. The next time I saw my brother was at the morgue in Hawaii, the day before his funeral.

How exactly did the family win the ranking of the album?

We all went through our own processes of introspection, reflection and songwriting. We all had our moments of sadness and despair, whenever it hit us that our brother was really gone.

When it was time to go into the studio and record, we all had a hard time singing in the studio. Even for public performances [that followed], we've had to somehow get all our tears out beforehand. One of the best decisions we made was to try to release our album during the week of Albert's first death anniversary. If we had nothing to look forward to that month, it would have been more difficult to endure.

[Hyde.com/salud/celebrities/ew]

E-mail the columnist at rvengco_USE@yahoo.com and read the blog, "The Angeles Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/reportersparty

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Andrew F. Kazmierski

"WE WANT to inspire others to spread the message of hope and comfort."

FIRST, she became Miss Hawaii. At right, she Pinay beauty is crowned by Heather French, Miss America 2000. "Life is so fragile," Angela says. "It should never be taken for granted."

Angela Baraquio won the beauty title in 2001; her brother killed himself 5 years later

Will it Albert, before the ending: "This is my favorite photo of us together."

Makisig stars with KC

MAKISIG MORALES TEAMS up with KC Concepcion in tomorrow's episode of "I Am KC" at 7 p.m. on MMK/CBN.

"Here's the," directed by Jerry Lopez Sineneng, tells the story of Charm and Jon (Jon Chavez (KC) who was killed in a drive-by.

Her death sends her on an obsessive phase where a superior one stars offers her a second lease on life if she could erase the one who accidentally killed her change within three days.

Charm meets her killer—a misguided 11-year-old boy Kato (Makisig).

How will Charm reveal his he's ways to the one who lost her life back?

'The Office'

Jack TV airs the latest season of "The Office." The award-winning sitcom that stars Jennifer Steve Carell, on Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m. during this month.

The season begins with Michael (Steve Carell) hosting a Free Rain when a freak accident causes due heads him to think he is crossed.

"The Office," adapted from the British series of the same title, portrays the lives of employees in the Scranton, Pennsylvania branch of the fictitious Dunder Mifflin Paper Company through the lens of a cheeky film crew.

CLICK!

New network appointees

ABS-CBN BROADCASTING Corporation has appointed award-winning journalists Maritess Dalupan Ming and Glenda Gloria as head to anchor and cable TV news groups.

Ming is now the editor-in-chief of abs-cbnnews.com, the online arm, the oldest And online news site. She will manage its content as part of the partnership with the investigative Newsbreak, which she concurrently heads.

Glenda Gloria becomes the chief operating officer of ABS-CBN News Channel or SNC.

GLORIA

Ming and Gloria have worked together as editors of Newsbreak. They wrote the book, "Under the Crescent Moon," which won the National Book Award in 2001. They are both alumni of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

MING

Luna Awards

Preparations are ongoing for the 26th Annual Film Academy of the Philippines awards show in mid-August, according to Lav Martinez, director general of the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP).

Martinez said the drafting of voting procedures will ease "much easier" this year, so members can review qualified films in preparation for the voting process.

Martinez, who calls the FAP's awards "the most prestigious in the country," said the award-giving body's credibility cannot be questioned as the winners are chosen by their peers.

Exclusive contract

Miss Baraquio, who co-anchors GMA's prime time newscast "24 Oras" and anchors the top-rating Public Affairs show "Imbestigador," recently renewed his exclusive contract with GMA Network.

Photo below shows Baraquio, second from left, shaking hands with GMA Network chair, president and CEO Felipe L. Gozon, after the contract signing. Also present were GMA EVP and Chief Operating Officer Gilberto R. Duavit, Jr., left, and GMA SVP for Corporate Services Group Felipe S. Yalong, right.

Roundup

Obsessed with 'Urduja'

'What better way to pay homage to the artistry of Pilipino animators?'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE WAY HE RECOUNTED IT, the making of the animated feature film "Urduja" was an epic saga in itself.

Tony Reviera, head of APT Entertainment, recalled that his pet project took all of seven years. (It's currently in its final production stages; APT is planning to bring it to theaters by next year.)

But the idea first hit him earlier, in 1997.

A friend had given him a copy of a script on (Chinese pirate) Limahong and one of the minor characters was Urduja.

Reviera asked himself: What better way to pay homage to the artistry of local animators than by producing a full-length film on the warrior princess Urduja?

Reviera, best known as the man behind the country's longest running variety show, "Eat Bulaga," has always been fascinated with the art of animation.

"Even as a newcomer in television, I experimented on a little animation here and there, using cutouts," he said. An example is the opening billboard of "Eat Bulaga," which features cartoon versions of Tito, Vic and Joey.

Out of the box

He's always been a fan of Disney flicks as well, and counts "The Lion King" and "Mulan" as all-time favorites.

"Being Alan (They're different)," he noted.

But "Urduja," he aim is to deliver an animation movie that's "out of the box."

When Regine Velasquez, who voiced Urduja, first saw the footage, Reviera said "she teared up and applauded, and said she got goose bumps."

When a rough reel was shown last year to the audience of "Eat Bulaga," Reviera swore "you could hear a pin drop at the studio." The silence was also capped with a rousing ovation, he recalled.

Before unveiling the teaser to the public during the Metro Manila Film Festival in December, he had kept the project a secret.

During pre-production, a dozen or so animators were holed up in a room in a Greenhills building. "Code name for the film was Project 926, after the room number," he said.

Later, they formed out the work to animators in Palawan and Makati.

Adding drama to this ongoing saga, Reviera's head of animation, Mindy Elizaga of Seventeen, fell ill with cancer. "But she recovered and she's on top of the project once again."

Reviera said he could have produced three or even four regular live-action movies with "Urduja's" budget.

Throughout the long, arduous process, director Maggie Tiongson stuck by Reviera. "I decided Maggie was, that he had heroes as protective of Urduja, he didn't even want her to be kissed by the male characters' Lito Ilarag (voiced by Tonz Montano)," the producer said.

He's just as serious, though. "My wife thinks that I've fallen in love with Urduja."

(E-mail: bayanisandiegojr@hotmail.com)

"RASKALS"

'Kalayaan' . . .

From page G4

thing they could use as weapons to fight the invaders.

The film will also be screened at the Fantasporto International Fantastic Festival in Rotterdam in July.

'Bulibisyan Box'

Mes-de Guzman's "Bulibisyan Box" will **represent the country in the Festival of** Independent Cinema in Barcelona, Spain this month, according to the film's assistant director, Noel "Teach" Mendoza.

It will also compete in a film festival in Italy in June.

The film tells the story of children of overseas Filipino workers who send home balikbayan boxes, or parcels of gifts and provisions to their families.

According to Mendoza, also the production manager of "Bulibisyan Box," co-produced by Sampaguitabol and Cinelargo Productions, has received invitations to compete in film festivals in California and Colorado in the United States.

"Haw-Ang"

Dong Ramos' "Haw-Ang," a digital film **that chronicles the struggles of a nun** in her quest to educate Negrito children, will compete in the Indianapolis International Film Festival, which runs from April 23 to May 3.

The film, which is endorsed by the Department of Education, received an Award of Excellence in Narrative Film from The Accolade Film Awards in California in January. It is produced by Starling Gem Inn Productions Inc.

Ramos said his next project, about organ donors in the country, is currently on the drawing board.

'When Tinsawa Meets Delgado'

Ray Defiesta Gibachier's "When Tinsawa Meets Delgado" is being screened at the ongoing 21st Singapore International Film Festival.

"Tinsawa" tackles the plight of people who take up nursing courses with the end in view of working abroad.

E-mail: news@inquirer.com.ph

Lea Salonga's half-brother stars in a film about the struggles of gay beauty pageant contestants

PRODUCER Tony Reviera says his wife suspects he's fallen in love with Urduja because he keeps watching the film, always wanting to improve it.

KIMA ACTIVO

'Kalayaan' and more indie news

By Marinel R. Cruz

TWO ASIAN ACTORS ARE ON BOARD for Sherwader Adolf Alix's new project.

Taiwanese superstar Ken Chu, who starred in Alix's film "Batanes," has agreed to re-produce the director's next movie, which is about the plight of Filipino soldiers assigned in the Spratly Islands.

"We went to Batanes when I talked to Ken about the concept. He got back to me recently and said he has convinced other Chinese producers to invest in the new film," Alix told Inquirer Entertainment on Tuesday.

The film, titled "Kalayaan," will star Lou Veloso(also actor donnis Formaglanan in the lead role). He appeared in the 2004 horror film, "Shutter."

"Kalayaan" also features Filipino actors Joem Bascon and Arnold Reyes.

"We are currently in the process of securing permits. We hope to start filming soon," said Alix.

'Thank You Girls'

First-time director Charlebelle Gaberia recently finished filming an all-Visayan movie in Bacolod titled, "Thank You Girls," which depicts the struggles of contestants in gay beauty pageants.

Ella Balinaga, half-brother of celebrated singer-actress Lea Salonga, plays the lead role. The film will also feature first-time Hispanic actors.

Gaberia was the editor of Dante Mendoza's "Tirador" and "Foster Child." She also wrote the script to Alix's gay movie "Darkwish."

"Thank You Girls" is about five gay beauty pageant contestants who travel from Bacolod City to Cagayan de Oro with the mission of conquering "the grandest competition of beauty, personality and brains" in the province.

"TYG" is produced by New Sinchi based on Sk Coral Consulting. It is set for release in July.

'Resiko'

Mark A. Reyes' "Resiko" has been invited to compete in the 13th Udine Far East Festival in Italy, which runs from April 19 to 26.

The sci-fi flick, which stars Iza Borg Revilla, bagged the Best Picture Award at the 2007 Shown Manila Film Festival. It tells the story of Colonel Ramoncito, a soldier who leads a part of the human resistance against invading aliens known as the Hukbings. Because of limited resources, humans are forced to scavenge for any

LIVING Stars

Edna Emerie G. Rolando

Kapuso actress Kim Chui shows us what's in her closet. /H3

RACHELLE ANN GO

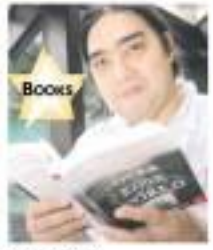
MY SHIH TZU NIGEL WAS A GIFT FROM (ex-boyfriend). Christian Bautista on my birthday (Aug. 31) last year. Nigel is turning one this June. He's so chubby. I find it hard to carry him around. Once, I took him to the mall. I put him inside a pet bag, but the security guard resisted. So I had to beg the guard to let us in. This is my first time to have a pet. I think Christian overheard me admiring a Shih Tzu once ... so he gifted me one. Nigel looks like a stuffed toy and acts like a baby. He's super cute, too, and so mahilig (possessive).

Raymund Sam Ediger Jr.

NICOLE CHIEN

AT THE PRESS con for Lea Salonga's new musical "Chess," her daughter Nicole Bessely seemed inexplicably drawn to the microphone. Grandpa Lupus asked Nicole, who's turning two next month, "You want to sing?" And when Lea took center stage and sang "There's Music in You," Nicole gasped in the seat, "Mommy!" And then she left screaming silently.

Raymund Sam Ediger Jr.



MARK MEILY

I FOUND LAURENCE BERGREEN'S "Under the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe" on the internet. It's for my research because I'm doing a screenplay on husband Magellan's "discovery" of the Philippines. The book is full of politics, intrigues and infighting. It was a time of conflict. I learned that even the islands' natives had their own tribal wars. The book explains why Lapu-Lapu succeeded in killing Magellan, whose missionary didn't believe in him.

Raymund Sam Ediger Jr.

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STARMILLS

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6 RITE RUMMER

BACOLOD

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2 ATONEMENT
3 ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES
4 DOOMSDAY
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6 SIKIL

ILOILO

1 STEP UP 2
2 SLEUTH
3 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
4 DOOMSDAY
5 MEET THE SPARTANS
6 10,000 BC

"COLORFUL accessories are in fashion this summer," says the bubbly teen.

AT THE moment, her favorite scent is Pleasures by Estée Lauder. These are all gifts.

HER dressed has cleared her with a lot of presents, including cosmetics.

Kim likes it plain and simple

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

PINOY BIG BROTHER: TEEN Edition" winner Kim Chiu, who turns 18 this month, is quite sure she will be wearing gowns and high-heeled shoes at the grand debut party that ABS-CBN is preparing for her on April 26.

ACCESSORIES also used her ruffled eyes.

SHE likes watches with thick bracelets.

"IT'S OK to wear a pair of jeans at least three times before washing it as the color won't fade easily. But never put it back inside the cabinet after using, just hang it on the wall.

KIM prefers flip flops to high-heeled shoes and other prissy pairs, like Aldo and Steve Madden footwear.

But in a chat with Living Stars last week, Kim said she really prefers jeans, T-shirts and flip flops to dresses and stylish footwear. "I have a lot of those [clothes] things only because I need them for work," she said. "Mas simple lang po talaga ang mga gusto ko."

A quick tour of Kim's bedroom and walk-in closet confirms her bias for the plain and unconfigured.

Kim owns pairs of expensive brands like Crocs, Aldo and Steve Madden but favors locally-made footwear. The young actress also has a huge collection of bags, which she hardly uses.

Kim said she gets a lot of freebies — perfumes, sneakers, toys, footwear — from sponsors and fans. "I'm lucky because I don't have to spend so much on these things."

TOPS

This peach-colored silk blouse is memorable because Big Brother gave this to me and asked me to wear it during one of the eviction nights. I got to use this again for another show after my stint in PBB.

The blue sequined top is a gift from a fan. I first wore it during my ABS-CBN trade launch. I matched it with black pants.

JACKET

Tonight this pink Mickey Mouse cotton jacket during my first trip to Hong Kong last March. This is the first item I bought with my Hong Kong dollars.

PANTS

Olds wearing pants more than dresses. I've had this pair for a long time now. I like the rhinestone beadwork on the back pockets.

It's OK to wear a pair of jeans at least three times before washing it as the color won't fade easily. But never put it back inside the cabinet after using, just hang it on the wall.

DRESSES

This white Grecian dress [Jones Just Just] is memorable to me. I bought this in a luxury boutique I avoided something taboo for ABS-CBN's Christmas Special. I ran to the nearest mall to buy it.

The old red Chinese dress is special. I wore this in school [Cebu Chiends School on Wuling Wuling Street, Cebu City] for two straight years during our Chinese New Year celebration. Parang conform ng waiters sa mga Chinese restaurants.

HATS

Most of my hats are gifts from friends, like this pink and purple baseball cap that Ate Pokwang gave me when she came home from Australia. Expect pasalubong 'yan at least 'yan.

I use hats when I go to public places where I don't want to be recognized.

SCENTS

I don't buy them. They're mostly gifts from fans. I'm using Pleasures [by Estée Lauder]'s now. I'm not really into scents. When I finish a bottle I just pick from what I have. Hehe. Sa ang amoy ko.

ACCESSORIES

I like watches with thick bracelets. Parang hindi kiss sa TV ang mapapo. Mostly sa's provides most of my watches — two pieces each month.

I pick earrings and necklaces depending on the occasion. Colorful items are in fashion this summer. If you have a limited budget, you can buy a lot in bazaars for P50 or P10.

SHOES

I buy shoes in different sizes so I can easily find a pair if I need to wear any of my shoes. It's important that I feel comfortable wearing them. My favorite is this pair of gold pumps [by Steve Madden]. Good na garud 'yan, no long po ako. Hehe! Just.

I'm a size 6. I have really short toes. If I get a pair that's a size bigger, I stuffed it at sapilan ang mga daliri ko.

I love Big Bags. There's perfect this summer. I'm lucky I get many in different designs from my sponsors.

Kim's birthday is on April 30. Her debut will be held at the Glass Garden on Salcedo Road in Pasay City. She will have a birthday bash at the mezzanine lobby there "SOAP" on Sunday.

E-mail marsan@inquirer.com.ph

MID Dimension when from high school

KIM wear hats when she goes to public places where she doesn't want to be recognized.

Inside art

Spanish architect-designer Javier Mariscal, in charge of the 53rd Biennale di Venezia, is shown with Yoko Ono inside Mario Laboda's artwork, "Prepare to Enter the Blue Room," in an earlier exhibition.

Indoor gardening

Controversial talk show host Martha Stewart, left, and award-winning actress Helen Mirren kid around during a break in the taping of a "Martha Stewart Show" episode on indoor gardening in New York on April 7.

Veggie lover

Actress Kimberly Williams-Paisley speaks during a recent interview with Country Music Television before the taping of a public service announcement for the "Live Your Veggies" green program in Nashville, Tennessee.